No. 1096
26 December –
8 Jan. 2004
£1.30

PRIVATE EYE

NEW YEAR ISSUE WITH £250 PRIZE CROSSWORD

SADDAM ★ NEW SHOCK ★

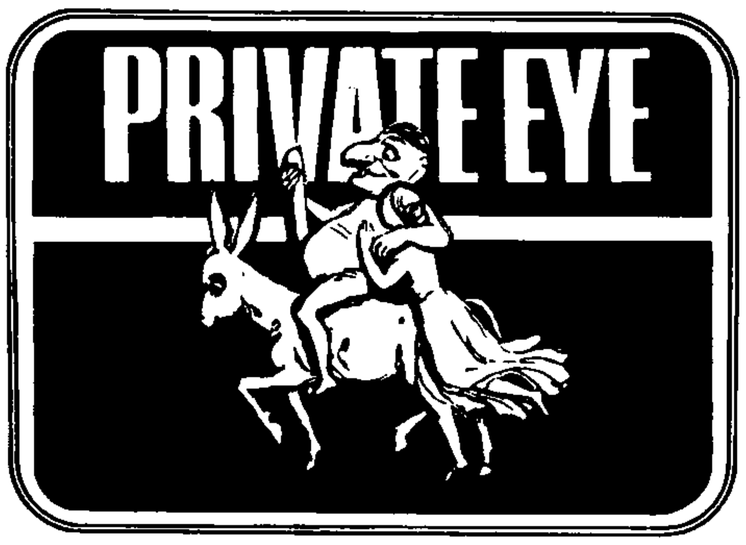
The most distressing part of our job?

Not being allowed to do it.

RSPCA

The law gives us the power to do something now that this animal is dead. Brilliant. This horse choked to death because of the way that it was tethered to the tree. Now that it's dead, we're allowed to prosecute the owner. But if we had come across it sooner, legally we wouldn't have been able to do a thing. Because there isn't anything illegal about tying a horse to a tree and leaving it there. So it would still have died. It's an archaic Act of Parliament that's remained more or less the same since 1911. Now, 92 years later, a new Animal Welfare Bill is finally being considered by the government. But what is there to consider? Help the politicians to reach the right decision. Visit us online at www.rspca.org.uk/NewWelfareLaw, send a letter to Tony Blair or text HELP HORSE1 to 80210.

The aims of the RSPCA are to prevent cruelty and promote kindness to animals. Reg.charity 219099



THE conviction of Ian Huntley for the Soham murders and the revelation that he had previously been accused of a string of sex offences against children reaffirms the need for people who work with children or the vulnerable to be properly vetted.

It now seems certain that such intelligence, and any repeat allegations against a suspected sex offender, will have to be made available to prospective employers. The big question is: who will be responsible for handling and disseminating such sensitive material?

Surely not our old friends Capita at the criminal records bureau (CRB). Eyebrows have already been raised at news that Crapita is confident of renewing its £400m-plus home office contract to run the CRB – despite a disastrous start marked by wrong information, delay and inability to check aliases (*Eyes passim*).

Those working in the field are concerned that the contract is also likely to be expanded to include NHS staff who need checks, even though Crapita ran into huge problems when checks on teachers were added to its remit.

The CRB was not consulted in the Huntley disaster because of a delay in getting the bureau up and running. (And even if it had been consulted, of course, Huntley had no convictions for sexual offences despite the many allegations against him). Napo, the probation officers' union, has put together a dossier of CRB disasters and believes that, despite the vetting cock-ups made by Cambridgeshire and Humberside police forces over Soham, it is still the police who should retain responsibility for "soft intelligence" about a person's background. To hand it to Capita would be just too "frightening".

The Hackwatch Awards 2003 5
Summit of stupidity: Brussels Sprouts 7
Councils of despair: Rotten Borough Awards 11
Starkey staring mad: Diary 25
Talking turkey: Christmas books 26, 27
MMR: TV drama out of a crisis 29
Bumper £250 Christmas Crossword 31

EDITORIAL
6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. Tel: 020 7437 4017.
Fax: 020 7437 0705. **Email:** strobes@private-eye.co.uk
http://www.private-eye.co.uk

PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS/SALES
PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA.
Subscription enquiries: 0870 750 1714
Fax: 01795 414 555. Overseas: 01795 414 871
Special Reports: 0870 750 1711 **Books:** 0870 750 1712
Email: private-eye@galleon.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
£21 per annum. Europe and Eire £29. Airmail (rest of world) £35. Cheques/POs to Private Eye. Mastercard/Visa.

ADVERTISING
Display: 020 7878 2303 Classified: 020 7240 9129

Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. **Printed** by BGP Ltd, Bicester OX6 7QZ. **Distributed** by P.E. Distributions, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. 020 7437 4017.

ABC

FOLLOWING Ian Huntley's conviction, tabloid editorials raged at the "blunders" and "incompetence" of Humberside police. "Fix This Flawed System" demanded Rebekah Wade's *Sun*. "System Fails to Pick Out a Monster" agreed the Piers Moron's *Daily Morgan*.

But they had less to say – nothing, in fact – about their own bungling, which nearly sabotaged the chances of securing a conviction. From the moment Huntley and Maxine Carr were arrested last year, several editors seem to have forgotten the existence of contempt-of-court rules. Wade, then editing the *Screws*, revived her campaign for details of convicted paedophiles to be publicly available – and illustrated the piece with a photo of Holly and Jessica, clearly designed to imply that Huntley was himself one.

During the trial, coverage in Rebekah's *Sun* was so flagrantly prejudicial that Mr Justice Moses wrote to her asking why she was publishing such "ludicrous" and "misleading" stories.

Piers Moron, too, seems to have dispensed with the legal niceties. After one report pronouncing Carr guilty long before the jury considered its verdict, *Mirror* hack Brian Reade was called before the judge for a bollocking. The attorney-general is now considering whether Moron and Reade should be prosecuted.

As Mr Justice Moses asked, with understandable puzzlement: "Don't these papers have any legal advisers at all?"

JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT

10 December: Department of environment launches new report blaming "increasing greenhouse gas levels due to human activities" for global warming.

15 December: Department of transport gives go-ahead to expand 11 airports around UK.

"Lose the sleigh bells"

WHY did Mohamed Fayed go to the court of session in Edinburgh in his latest attempt to reopen the inquiry into the death of Diana and Dodi?

In a BBC interview last week he explained that "as a resident of Scotland" he looked to the Scottish courts to secure his rights. "I believe I will get justice here in Scotland," he added, "My first home is here."

How strange. Can the Phoney Pharaoh have forgotten the press release he issued on 28 March this year announcing that "as from today he will permanently reside in Switzerland"? It seems unlikely: the statement is still prominently displayed on his official website.

Although McFayed turned up at the court last Monday wearing a tartan suit and tartan shirt, it seems his Scottishness has its limits. His 27,000-acre estate at Invercassley and Duchally in Sutherland is owned by BSA & Ross Estates Co, which is located in Liechtenstein and Ireland. And his reason for moving to Geneva last spring was that the Inland Revenue had ended an arrangement whereby he paid a fixed sum of about £200,000 in tax regardless of how many millions he actually earned. The Revenue had originally agreed to the deal because Fayed's accountant told them that his client was "domiciled in Egypt".

Now that he is living in Geneva, this self-styled "resident of Scotland" is allowed to spend no more than 90 nights a year in Britain if he wants to avoid liability for tax. Still, no doubt he'll be back for Hogmanay and Burns Night.

NEWS that Norwich Union is sacking 2,500 workers and transferring their work to a call centre in India has stirred the memories of former clients of the company.

One young man who had insured his home loan with the Norwich applied for mortgage relief when he lost his job. Through the post by return came a glossy 37-page booklet from the insurer called BACK TO WORK. Amid much solid advice about how to fill in a CV, there was a moving section entitled Feelings and Reactions. Being sacked, the booklet reveals, leads to several stages of distress.

"Emotional thoughts or feelings of anger, withdrawal or upset are indications of being at this stage. Sometimes the emotion may not be directed at the company but at an individual or can be recognised as general bitterness or irritability. Being 'moody' or feeling upset are very common reactions. Common phrases are 'it's not fair' or 'it's not right'."

Nothing much can be done at this stage, it seems, but eventually the sacked person reaches "capitulation" when "we can start to rebuild, take control and act more positively". The booklet is not being sent to any of the workers now being sacked by Norwich Union.

PS: The hostility of trade unions to the sackings must surely end the firm's advertising campaign based on the old trade union song, immortalised by the Strawbs, whose chorus trumpeted: "You won't get me, I'm part of the union, till the day I die."

Trade union employees at Norwich Union were always peeved at the use of an old trade union song to advertise their employer. But now they are cheerfully changing the words to "You won't get me, I'm part of the Union – till the day I'm sacked."

AS the country's leading supporter of the private finance initiative (PFI), chancellor Gordon Brown is worried that British firms are securing too little privatisation and PFI action in other European countries.

In his pre-budget review statement, he announced that he was appointing Alan Wood, chief executive of Siemens, to conduct an "independent review of UK businesses' experience of accessing public contracts in Europe".

No doubt Mr Wood will consider those companies' pisspoor reputations in PFI contracts. He could start with the unmitigated fiasco at the Passport Office in 1999 that was so roundly criticised by the normally placid national audit office. The name of the contractor? Siemens!

Street of Shame

GREG DYKE may think he has solved "the John Humphrys problem" by forbidding high-profile presenters from writing "newspaper or magazine columns on current affairs or contentious issues". But what about their other extra-curricular activities?

One nice little earner is the conference circuit. John Humphrys is one of the star performers on the books of Speakers For Business agency, which lists the "topic areas" on which he is willing to speak (for a five-figure fee). They include "Europe", "international affairs", "food industry" and "politics", as well as more light-hearted after-dinner stuff.

Humphrys's recent clients include Hewlett-Packard, Nabarro Nathanson, Conquest Business Media, the PSI Group and the European Organisation for Quality. At the Market Research Society's annual conference in Birmingham this year, where he gave a talk about "the love-hate relationship of the media with market research", he was billed as "the charismatic and controversial Mr Humphrys". But not contentious, of course.

BBC head of news Richard Sambrook said last week that the crackdown on column-writing was necessary to preserve the corporation's reputation for "impartiality" and "independence". Yet the corporate gravy-train is probably as much of a threat to the BBC's reputation. As *Eye* readers may recall, five years ago the 2,500 employees of the HFC Bank – a merger between two American loan companies – were sent a free video in which their chief executive Adrian Hill was "interviewed" by John Humphrys. The BBC man meekly accepted every answer without demur (as well he might, since he was earning a small fortune for this puff-job), and didn't even challenge Hill's announce-ment that the merged company would have to lose 700 jobs and be "pretty brutal" about it.

Stopping Humphrys from appearing in the *Sunday Times* will do nothing to remove these potential conflicts of interest. It may not even lose him money, since the BBC is expected to give Humphrys a £100,000 pay-rise so he doesn't feel "seriously disadvantaged". The real victim, ironically, is a freelance non-BBC hack who is paid by Humphrys to, er, "research" his *Sunday Times* column – and who will now be £40,000 a year worse off.

"DISGUST AT CITY VICE ZONES" thundered the front page of the *Sunday Express* on 7 December, "exclusively" revealing that some British cities might be considering allowing "tolerance zones" for prostitution. "Residents of areas affected are horrified by the sight of semi-naked girls plying their trade on street corners," the paper revealed.

Meanwhile in the paper's TV listings readers could study the full schedule for Television X, sister company to the *Express*. In addition to two hours of free porn per night (which kick off well before the watershed), paying subscribers could look forward to such highlights as *Filthy British Lesbo Girls, Mature Mama Meltdown, Icky Sicky Mucky Mingers, Butt Quest, Cocks and Throbbers,* and *Sodomy on the Menu*. To prove that there was nothing sleazy about such trade, the paper printed the last two with asterisks obscuring some of the vowels in their titles.

AMANDA Platell's *Evening Standard* column is "a piece of gutter-press journalism... based on malevolent untruths." Says who? Er, the *Evening Standard*, which took the unusual step of publishing a lengthy letter from its own theatre critic Nicholas de Jongh ripping into his colleague for her "antigay malignity" in a piece about Chris Bryant, the MP who advertised on a gay dating website.

The fact that editor Veronica Wadley – who was praised in de Jongh's letter for her "valuable, positive, insightful features about gay life" – allowed it to appear should leave Platell in some doubt as to the future of her sub-Glenda column.

Time, it would seem, has not taught the ex-Tory spin doctor to be cautious over such matters. In 1999 she was sacked as editor of the *Sunday Express* after printing an exposé, complete with snatched pictures, of the existence of Peter Mandelson's boyfriend.

SUN readers could be forgiven for wondering if the title on the paper's showbiz pages "Victoria Newton's Bizarre" is actually a comment on the columnist rather than an indication of who writes it.

Newton, who took over the column from ageing rocker Dominic Mohan in April, was introduced to readers as a "scooperstar" who would break "some of the biggest stories in showbiz".

A fine example came on 12 December when Newton's lead story revealed that Steve Jones, a daytime TV presenter, had flown to America for a date with actress Halle Berry. "Welshman Steve would only say last night 'I haven't got a clue how you found out about this'," reported a breathless Newton.

Er – could she have read about it in the *News of the World*, the *Mirror*, *Heat* magazine or even Jones' local paper the *Western Mail*, all of which reported the date when it actually happened, in mid-November? Curiously, Jones gave exactly the same quote to all of them at the time.

JUST FANCY THAT!

"Abu Nidal, the Palestinian terrorist, was murdered on the orders of Saddam Hussein after refusing to train al-Qaeda fighters based in Iraq, the *Sunday Telegraph* can reveal." — Front-page "exclusive" by Con Coughlin, *Sunday Telegraph*, 25 August 2002.

"Iraq's coalition government claims that it has uncovered documentary proof that Mohammed Atta, the al-Qaeda mastermind of the 11 September attacks against the US, was trained in Baghdad by Abu Nidal, the notorious Palestinian terrorist." — Front-page "exclusive" by Con Coughlin, *Sunday Telegraph*, 14 December 2003.

Rudolph the Redtop Reindeer

"...C'mon Santa got anything for us?... You've been spending a lot of time with those Elves lately! Where's Mrs Claus? Haven't seen you two out together for quite a while, know what I mean?... You've put on a few pounds recently 'Fatty Christmas'...The public have a right to know..."

NO MATTER how often the *Mirror* swears off stories about getting drunk at the Christmas party, it can't seem to stop itself printing them.

On 11 December, the morning after a double page spread from lad-mag stalwart Bill Borrows "in defence of the almighty bender", the paper was scathing about what it called "a binge too far". "A new Government report into binge-drinking says it's costing the country £20bn a year and causing 22,000 premature deaths", the paper solemnly reported alongside a sober "look at the dangers" and horrific case studies detailing the "SHAME" of boozy partygoers.

By the next day, however, the paper had fallen off the wagon again, devoting two entire pages to "The Ultimate Office Xmas Party Kit", which advised readers to "place a bucket by the bed and put goldfish somewhere else. It might mean that you don't have to feed them for a couple of weeks, but do you really want your fish eating vomit, even if it is your own?"

THERE wasn't much sign of festive cheer at the *Sun* this Christmas. With redundancy forced on a number of staff, the office party, held at Smollensky's in East London, could well have been a sullen affair.

Yet those being shown the door were able to put a cheerful face on proceedings. A couple of the soon-to-be-unemployed decided to send an email to all staff inviting them to their leaving party at Smollensky's on the same night, and thanking management for arranging and paying for the do.

No sooner had this arrived in Rebekah Wade's inbox than a follow-up email was swiftly dispatched by management firmly disassociating itself from the invitation.

THE latest recruit to the reporting staff at the *Independent on Sunday* is one Annabel Fallon, a former work experience hackette who just happens to be the niece of the *Indie*'s managing director, Ivan Fallon.

Ms Fallon has by no means been singled out for special treatment, however. She joins her uncle's son-in-law, Bill Bloom, who is a sub on the international edition of the *Indie* – one of the few subs in Fleet Street, in fact, with his own space in the executive car park.

Meanwhile editor-in-chief Simon Kelner's partner, Sally Ann Lasson, has her own cartoon strip, and Kelner's nephew, Adam Leigh, is features editor of the daily. So let there be no more talk of nepotism. It's simply what being a "family newspaper" is all about!

PORTAKABIN

A FEW weeks ago the *Eye* suggested that Dick Ellershaw, trade marks officer for Portakabin Ltd, had the most tragic job in the world (Letters, *Eye* 1092). While in no way changing our opinion of his job, we are prepared to concede that he does it most assiduously.

In recent weeks Mr Ellershaw has upbraided several other publications for using the word "Portakabin" where "relocatable building" (or fancy shed) would trip as easily from the tongue. *Shares* magazine, a small trade publication covering "the thrills, risks and travails of investing in equities and related areas", was castigated in identical terms to the *Eye* on 24 October.

But Mr Ellershaw excelled himself by spotting that *The Blether*, a monthly Aberdeenshire freesheet covering "Cults to Craigendarroch, Culter to Clachnaben, all points in between and a few beyond", had in its July issue described the extension to Elrick Primary School as a "portacabin".

Though it took Mr Ellershaw a full five months to spot the misnomer (he was presumably working his way through a backlog of copies of every publication in the whole world ever), his full wrath has duly descended upon the letters page of *The Bletherer*'s December issue.

HACKWATCH AWARDS 2003

MYSTIC MOGG AWARD "ALL TALK of a leadership contest now is strictly for the birds. IDS will lead the Tories into the general election, whatever such giants of our time as David Mellor may think to the contrary." — Matthew d'Ancona, *Sunday Telegraph*, 21 September.

MOST TACTFUL REPORTING THE RUNNER-UP is *Sunday Times* hack Bryan Appleyard, whose piece about the Hutton inquiry on 24 August included a striking quote from Downing Street adviser Phil Bassett. "As work on the dossier progressed," Appleyard wrote, "the comments were candid. Bassett said it was 'intelligence-lite'." It was shortage of space, no doubt, that prevented the paper from printing Bassett's words in full: "...intelligence-lite, like *STimes* at its worst".

The winning entry dates back as far as 1 January 2003, when the *Daily Mail* devoted considerable space to the news that Cherie Blair had won the *Today* programme's "One-in, One-out" poll, being nominated for deportation by 31 percent of listeners. The *Mail* was also glad to report that Sheik Abu Hamza al-Masri had come second – but sadly had no room to mention that the nation's third most hated figure, who received 20 percent of the votes for forced expulsion, was none other than its own editor, Paul Dacre.

MOST CLUELESS EDITOR "VERY embarrassing. I was on holiday, of course. It should never have gone in." Thus Boris Johnson on a *Spectator* column by Taki which identified black people as the root of all evil. "It was a terrible thing," the editor added despairingly. "But what can you do?"

SCOOP OF THE YEAR A TRIUMPH for Dominic Lawson of the *Sunday Telegraph*, whose front page on 7 September carried a photo of a drunken Lancastrian folk-singer alongside the huge question: "IS THIS LORD LUCAN?" Lawson later explained that although he suspected the story was bollocks, it was "a rattling good yarn" which helped sell extra copies of his paper.

UNDER-STATEMENT AWARD "THE CURRENT American elite is the Third Reich of our times." — John Pilger, *Daily Mirror*, 29 January.

HARDEST-HITTING EDITORIAL "SNOW IS Nature's theatrical masterstroke, its perishing *pièce de résistance*. No man-made projectile has as ambitious a reach as the stealthy amassing of snowflakes. No missile is as suddenly and deftly transformative. Snow comes as Nature's retaliation to the grubbiness and wretchedness that human beings have imposed on their landscape. In one fell swoop the grime and tawdriness of everyday life is simply erased, its beauty and mystery magically reassembled in emphatic chiaroscuro." — Editorial in the *Times*, 9 January.

BEST NEW DOUBLE-ACT DURING the summer Rachel Royce revealed in the *Spectator* that she was now so "pathetically poor" that she had been obliged to join the Hearts women-only pyramid investment scheme in a desperate attempt to reduce her overdraft – "but please don't tell my boyfriend". The boyfriend in question is Rod Liddle – who, by happy coincidence, wrote about Hearts in a *Grauniad* column at the same time. The scheme wasn't sustainable, he observed, because "there is a strictly finite supply in this country of stupid, gullible women".

JOINED-UP EDITING AWARD "MINNELLI splits with her beau Gest, husband No. 6." — Page 1 headline, *Observer*, 27 July.

"Still, if you looked hard enough you could learn just a little about her alleged interviewees, like the fact that Mr and Mrs G really do seem to be in love." — Review of *Ruby Wax with Liza Minnelli*, page 20, *Observer*, 27 July.

"It's annoyed me more than once to see Caplin belittlingly described in the media as 'a former topless model'." — Barbara Ellen, *Observer* review section, 3 August, p2.

"Caplin, a former topless model..." — *Observer*, 3 August, p11.

PHIL SPACE AWARD CONGRATULATIONS to Sir Max "Hitler" Hastings, who dashed off dozens of why-oh-why pieces about the weather, vegetarians, tall people, labradors, salmon fishing and swimming trunks. His greatest triumph was to fill a whole page of the *Evening Standard* on 15 July with a rant about being fined for driving into central London without paying the congestion charge. His anger abated only when "my wife suggested that the joke was on Ken [Livingstone], since my penalty charge had been £40. I would get, well, a trifle more than that for writing an article for the *Evening Standard*." As indeed he did.

MOST SHAMELESS U-TURN THE LAURELS in this category go to the *Sun*'s Dominic Mohan, who already rejoices in the title of World's Worst Columnist. "*Big Brother 4* will be the biggest yet," he wrote on 15 May. "Whoever the dirty dozen inmates turn out to be, I predict ratings will be higher than ever... we will soon all be gripped... Believe me, the reality TV bubble isn't close to bursting."

As millions of viewers deserted the show, however, Mohan hastily decided to join the stampede. "The reality is that reality TV is dead," he pronounced a month later. "*Big Brother 4* is the final nail in the coffin of a now-bland telly genre which kept us amused for four years. We've all grown tired of seeing a tedious and average gang battling for their three minutes of fame."

POLLY FILLER AWARD "I WRITE this column each week, do a three-hour daily breakfast radio show, have a couple of TV documentaries on the go and have to finish my third novel by 22 December, approximately a week before I give birth to my second child. Last week, as I was chatting to Lord Hurd on the radio show, my husband sent a text to inform me we had run out of 'bog roll' and could I buy some on my way home?" — Jane Moore, the *Sun*, 22 October.

MEDIA STUDIES AWARD "AND SO, to save the boys at *Private Eye* the bother, I may as well declare an interest, in that Seaton is one of my editors. If you feel this professional connection fatally compromises my endorsement, then a) that is your loss, and b) you obviously don't understand the complications of the editor-writer relationship." — Nicholas Lezard reviews Matt Seaton's *The Escape Artist* in the *Guardian*.

MEMO OF THE YEAR JIM "MAD DOG" Murray, news editor of *Sunday Express*, announced "a dramatic change in direction for the paper" in a memo sent to his hacks on 30 June.

"Unlike most papers we do not have many sex stories or scandals, but that will change. We are aiming to have six sex stories a week. In an ideal world we should have a 'cabinet minister affair' story. Sex and scandal at the highest level of society always sells well, but these stories are notoriously difficult to get. We should be looking out for vicars having flings, Oxford dons having flings, Royals having flings, showbiz stars having flings..."

TOBY YOUNG AWARD THIS GOES, as custom demands, to the tireless self-publicist Toby Young. "It's not being a parent I object to, merely talking about it incessantly," he wrote in the *Guardian* on 22 March. "So I'm going to follow my publisher's advice and stay silent on the subject. This is the last time I'm ever going to write about it – I promise." Four months later, following the birth of his baby, Young began writing a weekly column for the London *Evening Standard* on the joys of, er, being a parent.

NON-APOLOGY OF THE YEAR "A NUMBER OF READERS have expressed concern that our front page picture on 9 April, showing Iraqis celebrating the liberation of Baghdad, had been enhanced to depict a larger crowd than actually existed. As it was taken from TV footage, extra people were added to the image to fill the space left by the removal of logos from the picture. In our opinion this did not alter the clarity or truth of the picture's message but we are happy to make this clear." — London *Evening Standard*, 24 July, defending the use of a faked photo.

APOLOGY OF THE YEAR "IN OUR interview with Sir Jack Hayward, the chairman of Wolverhampton Wanderers, page 20, Sport, yesterday, we mistakenly attributed to him the following comment: 'Our team was the worst in the First Division and I'm sure it'll be the worst in the Premier League.' Sir Jack had just declined the offer of a hot drink. What he actually said was 'Our tea was the worst in the First Division and I'm sure it'll be the worst in the Premier League.' Profuse apologies." — *Grauniad*, 12 August.

JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR THE COVETED statuette goes to *Daily Telegraph* pundit Barbara Amiel, aka Lady Black, for her crusade against inaccuracy in Middle Eastern reporting. Incensed by media coverage of the siege at the Church of Nativity, Barbara wrote a lacerating attack on "Orla Guerlin's bleak BBC report from Nazareth titled 'How the Israelis Stole Christmas'", and when the BBC defended the dispatch she returned to the fray. "I looked at my research again," she revealed on 27 March. "The most meticulous re-examination of Guerlin's report... couldn't dig up any allusion to the events that led to the siege in Nazareth."

Her research must have been very meticulous indeed. True, the BBC correspondent referred to throughout as "Guerlin" is actually Guerin, and the report was not actually titled "How the Israelis Stole Christmas" – and Guerin omitted to mention Nazareth only because the Church of the Nativity, as its name suggests, is in Bethlehem. But at least Babs managed to spell "Orla" right.

DEPUTY prime minister John Prescott was at his diplomatic best when Labour's national executive committee took a vote that could see London mayor Ken Livingstone, whom Prescott loathes, return to the party fold in the new year.

"Fucking press!" he spat at the massed ranks of hacks who were waiting for him as he left the NEC meeting.

Meanwhile Tony Blair, who only last year was vehemently opposed to Leninspart's return, apparently made a moving speech in favour of Ken's rehabilitation – and then slipped out of a backdoor, thus avoiding the press and the need to cast his vote. What a player!

MORE shenanigans in the rock solid Labour seat of Blaenau Gwent, currently represented by the seriously off-message Llew Smith – and once home to Labour giants Aneurin Bevan and Michael Foot (see *Eyes passim*).

The selection of Unison official and Blair babe Maggie Jones from an all-wimmin shortlist in the teeth of fierce local opposition now threatens to trigger a by-election that party panjandrums in Cardiff and London are desperate to avoid.

A local Labour boycott mean that only 100 or so members bothered to vote in the selection at the Ebbw Vale sports club and more people demonstrated outside the meeting than took part. Immediately after Jones had been confirmed as "new" Labour's standard bearer, eight of the nine constituency party officers resigned and promised to campaign at the next election in the marginal constituency of Monmouth next door.

Meanwhile a seething Llew Smith took to the airwaves to denounce "new" Labour's bulldozer approach, followed from interview to interview by party press officers who then scurried off to report back to Labour HQ.

Hilariously, Maggie Jones is being presented as a "left winger" in the Welsh press, aided by press officers in her union, Unison, who have been telling hacks how "Maggie opposed the war on Iraq and led the opposition to the Private Finance Initiative" – which is something of a surprise to many of Jones' colleagues, who don't remember her saying a word on either issue.

There was even more hilarity when Welsh secretary and leader of the House Peter Hain described Jones as "following in the great socialist traditions of Aneurin Bevan and Michael Foot". Meanwhile the sitting Welsh assembly member for Blaenau Gwent, Peter Law, who most local party members wanted as candidate, is threatening to run as a "Real Labour" candidate if a by-election is called in the new year – and most bookies have him odds-on to win.

OH DEAR. It seems Commons leader Peter Hain isn't being kept up to speed on events in Iraq.

On 6 December, US troops in armoured cars arrived at the temporary HQ of the Iraqi Federation of Workers' Trade Unions (IFTU) in Baghdad and raided the building, seizing files and minutes of meetings, arresting eight of the organisation's leaders and destroying many banners and posters *condemning* terrorism. All eight arrested trade unionists were released on 7 December, unharmed.

Despite a statement put out by the IFTU and worldwide condemnation by workers' organisations, British intelligence doesn't seem to have had word of the raid. Responding on 11 December to a parliamentary question about the event from backbencher Harry Barnes, Peter Hain insisted: "We have no information about an incident at the temporary headquarters of the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions."

He went on: "We understand that United States forces conducted a raid on the morning of 6 December in Baghdad, which resulted in the recovery of a significant quantity of arms and ammunition and the arrest of eight suspected fedayeen, two of whom now face murder charges."

The trade union movement in Iraq played a significant role in opposing Saddam and the IFTU in particular has been vocal in condemning the Ba'athist "yellow unions".

TIM YEO, Conservative shadow health minister, is the latest top Tory to adopt the powerful new catchphrase "I draw attention to my entry in the register of members interests".

All Yeo's attacks on the government start this way because he is hanging on to an outside job he has had since 1995 as chairman of Univent plc, a health firm.

Univent has a £3m turnover and operates care homes, a care staff agency and a children's nursery. It also sells beds to social services and "respite" care to the NHS. Consequently, it is hard to tell if Yeo's speeches are representing Tory policy, the views of an NHS contractor or both.

The Tories claim the shortage of nurses shows how Labour is mismanaging the NHS. But inspection reports on Univent's homes show that – while the care is good – they too often suffer from a shortage of nurses. An inspection of its Lakeside home in Norwood revealed that "several times per week there is a qualified RGN (Registered General Nurse) on duty, but not an RMN (registered Mental Nurse). Steps must be taken to rectify this". And there would be more gaps in staffing were it not for the fact that "a number of the care staff work long shifts – 7.30am-8pm".

There were also reports of shortages at two Univent homes in Weston-super-Mare. At one, Coombe Lodge, the inspector wrote in the National Care Standards Commission suggesting that "consideration could be given to increasing care staff wages to attract and retain good staff and reduce the need for agency use further."

The next time Yeo complains about shortages of NHS nurses, perhaps he will call for a wage increase in the NHS, matched by a wage increase in his own homes.

Coalition Office Party

LABOUR trade minister Mike O'Brien knows what war-torn Iraq needs to help it on the road to reconstruction and democracy: more British bankers.

That's why he put out a press release promoting a round table and "cocktail reception" where UK bankers could met a "delegation of Iraqis from the private banking, insurance and accounting sectors". In the end O'Brien didn't attend the event hosted by a private bankers lobby called International Financial Services London (IFSL). But Labour remains very enthusiastic about IFSL, which promotes private finance initiative schemes around the world.

The bankers' contribution to Iraqi freedom is of course questionable: the same banks loaned the millions that Saddam used to buy weapons for his dictatorship in the first place. Now Saddam is gone, international bankers are pursuing Iraq for debts accrued by the ex-dictator.

The reception was sponsored by Credit Lyonnais and held at its London offices. In the 1980s it was a Credit Lyonnais subsidiary called the Union des Banques Arabes et Francaises (UBAF) that organised a $500m loan for Saddam. It got so cosy with the dictator that his own state-owned Rafidain bank has a small share in the UBAF bank and a seat on its board.

Credit Lyonnais is one of the banks chasing the Iraqis for Saddam's debts. It is also part of the consortium backing the new Trade Bank of Iraq – despite noises from President Bush that firms from anti-war countries should be kept out of Iraqi contracts.

IFSL would not tell the *Eye* who attended the reception, but IFSL members include HSBC which, like Credit Lyonnais, was so close to Saddam it is also in a joint venture with Rafidain bank, the British Arab Commercial Bank.

HSBC's chief adviser on Iraq, and a director of the British Arab Commercial Bank, is Sir David Gore Booth. Funnily enough, in 1989 he was the foreign office mandarin in charge when the government began secret arms sales to Iraq! Gore Booth visited Saddam and later famously told the Scott inquiry into the cover-up that "half the picture can be accurate". A former ambassador to Saudi Arabia, he retired shortly after the parliamentary ombudsman described his activities in the gulf as "quite extraordinary and wholly deplorable".

Two other firms who loaned cash to Saddam, Standard Chartered and JP Morgan (who now manage the Trade Bank of Iraq) are also IFSL members.

THE Royal Bank of Canada's plans to cash-in on the UK's lucrative private finance initiative (PFI) market got a big boost with the recruitment of a new deputy chairman.

He is none other than gamekeeper turned poacher Sir Andrew Foster, former chief executive of the audit commission and once deputy chief executive of the NHS.

During Sir Andrew's time at the audit commission it produced some highly critical reports on PFI projects. So it was heartening to hear Sir Andrew welcoming his new job. "In Canada," he said, "the bank has a long history in advising on, and financing, public and essential services at provincial and municipal level. I am delighted to be participating in a similar initiative in the UK where the bank is making a long-term commitment to more efficient public services and partnerships between the public and private sector."

AN "independent" civil servant hired by the home office to look into Britain's pisspoor National Asylum Support Service (NASS) has walked straight into a senior management post at the agency while he was still investigating it.

Digby Griffith was one of four people appointed by ministers last March to investigate NAFF (sic) after endless reports that it was "hastily created" and "failing the vulnerable refugees it was created to help".

There was anger in the summer when the government refused to publish the report, favouring instead a two-page summary of recommendations which only hinted at the problems faced by the agency, which is responsible for providing accommodation and support to tens of thousands of asylum seekers.

Immigration minister Beverley Hughes assured MPs that NAFF's performance was improving and its senior management team had already been strengthened. As indeed it had. While carrying out the investigation, Mr Griffith was appointed the agency's head of accommodation.

In a Commons written reply to Mark Oaten, the Lib Dem home affairs spokesman, Ms Hughes said Griffith did not actually take up his post until the investigation was completed, even though he had got the job during it. So that's all right, then.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

IT WAS hard to know who looked more foolish after the recent collapse of Giscard's card house in Brussels: the British media, the Tory party or the European Union itself.

The farcical end to the bid to bulldoze through an EU constitution was wholly predictable, and the giveaway was Berlusconi's "little joke", the point of which not a single hack seemed to grasp. As negotiations stalled over Poland and Spain's insistence that they would not be robbed of the votes they were given at Nice, Berlusconi, as acting president, announced that he had a "secret formula" which would resolve all the difficulties.

When the moment came, Berlusconi reached into his pocket. 24 other leaders craned forward in anticipation, only to see the Italian prime minister pull out a small piece of blank blue paper. The "joke" was that this was the blue paper one is meant to light before retiring immediately. Sure enough, the talks collapsed, Giscard's constitution, like some sad old firework, fizzled off into the long grass, and everyone retired home as fast as Europe's transport system could carry them.

The reason the constitution was never going to work, as the British media never managed to grasp, was that Giscard had failed to reconcile the fundamental contradiction which has bedevilled the debate over the EU's future for three years. Essentially the battle has been between two wholly incompatible views.

On one side has been the traditional view of how the "government of Europe" was meant to work, right back to when the "project" was launched by Jean Monnet in 1950. The core of the "Monnet" or "Community method", was that Europe's ruling power must be "supranational". The whole idea of the commission was that it was meant to consist of technocrats who could govern Europe impartially, above the influence of nation states. The purpose of this was to prevent smaller countries being dominated by larger countries, which was why right at the start Monnet devised the idea of "qualified majority voting", weighting voting power in such a way that France and Germany could not push around their lesser brethren.

But ever since de Gaulle, the French in particular have tried to reassert their status as one of the two "big powers". What the French wanted, no one more than Chirac, was the "directoire method", whereby Europe is essentially run by a "directory" of France and Germany. Such is the battle which has been recently coming to a head.

Giscard's hidden agenda was to resolve the battle in France and Germany's favour, by giving them enough votes to dominate the show, at the expense of all those smaller countries dismissed by the French as the "dwarves". This was why, in Brussels, Spain and Poland were so adamant they were not going to give up the votes they had won in Nice, to the point where they were happy to see Giscard's constitution thrown in the bin.

It was comical to see the Tory party lining up behind the "gallant Poles" for wrecking the constitution, seemingly unaware that Poland's ex-Communist prime minister Leszek Miller is actually more integrationist than Chirac and Schroeder, lining up behind Prodi in backing the "Monnet method".

Berlusconi is happy, because his own agenda was to see the EU discredited in a way which will help him in his battle with Prodi, his main opponent in next year's Italian elections, and he got all he wanted. The blue paper was lit. The EU was left in shambles, Prodi retires on a note of failure. Berlusconi romps home. As for where this leaves Tony Blair, heaven knows: as hopelessly at sea as "Europe" has left him all along.

HIGH PRINCIPALS

FOR some time, further education colleges have franchised courses out to sub-contractors – with local businesses running training schemes and getting the education funding for them through the local college.

Of course there are a lot of dodgy companies willing to take the cash, while providing bogus evidence of non-existent students and training that never took place. So colleges have long been warned to look out for such scams.

Police are currently embarked on an investigation centred around Sandwell College in the West Midlands, amid allegations that £2m of public money has been paid out to fraudulent learning providers.

The investigation was launched in October after the Learning and Skills Council alerted the police to suspicions about how money given to Sandwell College was being spent. It could be the biggest scam since the demise of the individual learning accounts (ILAs), which allowed scam merchants to siphon off tens of millions of pounds from education funders.

Police raided four homes and four businesses in October, seizing papers and computers, but no one has been arrested or charged. The college is co-operating with the investigation. Detectives from the police economic crime unit said investigations were likely to go on for some months.

TUC NEWS

THE GMB's long-standing opposition to compulsory redundancies is about to be severely tested thanks to the financial crisis besetting the union (*Eyes passim*).

Short of cash and ideas about how to rescue the union from its financial plight, last month's meeting of the Central Executive Committee (CEC) discussed proposals which will see up to 80 GMB staff lose their jobs.

Hardest hit will be the 49 staff at the GMB's national college in Manchester, who will be fired in February when the 150-year-old listed building is due to be flogged off to property developers for around £5m. Also under threat are 30 staff at the union's national administration unit in Paisley and 12 at the union's national office in Wimbledon.

On a more positive note, it appears the committee has at least come to terms with the impending loss of conference facilities at the national college. Though the CEC normally holds its meetings at the college, last month's redundancy discussions were held in the more agreeable 5-star Radisson Edwardian MayFair hotel in London. That should cheer them up in Manchester.

'Blackleg'

DOWN ON THE FARM

THE department for the elimination of farming (Defra) is agonising over how to allocate the single farm payment (SFP), or decoupled subsidy, to farmers from 2005.

Perhaps agonising is too strong a word: Margaret Beckett has already got what she wanted with the principle of decoupling. It has allowed her to obey the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which is the first duty of every UK minister, and to obey her chief guru, the food manufacturer Lord Haskins. His orders are to get rid of as many farmers as possible – and all at the expense of the European Union (EU) budget. Job done.

Within farming, however, there is a bitter struggle for Beckett's ear between supporters of two opposing methods, and the difficulty for her is that either answer will expose the hollowness of the great vision.

Most of the big guns have been wheeled out to fire off in support of "historic payments", whereby farmers will be entitled to the same amount in subsidy as they claimed in the base years 2000-2. This is so manifestly a stitch-up of the milk quota, "we're all right, Jack" variety that the NFU is naturally behind it. In what may be its finest hour ("final", shurely? Ed), it is arguing simultaneously that decoupling is essential so that farming can be freed from the influence of subsidies... er... and that subsidies should continue on an historic basis.

One further gem reveals the ingenuity of desperation: that those who had the highest level of claims in the past somehow embody something called "the future of farming" and are thus sacred. Many people had believed that less intensive systems with lower stocking rates, or those who grew unsupported crops, were most likely to win official approval.

The historic option is immensely problematic because in the turmoil of recent agriculture since 2000, most farmers have taken on or given up land, or changed enterprises, and the land occupancy rules for qualification will be nightmarish. This never put MAFF off in the past, but it misses the fundamental point. The level of subsidy a particular farm received in the past was spurious: that is, it was the result of a whole set of decisions based on the prevailing economics. On the awful day of decoupling, the old economics will be swept away and there will be a new "level" playing field. Historic levels of subsidy will be meaningless.

The only alternative is the regionally averaged flat rate which, combining fairness with simplicity and elegance, is sure to find favour in Whitehall. But this one is no good either. A flat rate implies attachment to the land, and that means support for land ownership rather than farming – to the ruin of all tenants, as detailed in *Eye* 1075. It might be possible to combine a flat rate with historic qualification, which is probably the fairest and most workable compromise but which thus has no supporters.

'Gumboot'

RT HON NEIL KINNOCK

IN issue 1088 The Sprout column contained allegations regarding the conduct of Neil Kinnock in connection with a financial scandal at the London borough of Camden in the 1990s.

We accept unreservedly that there is and was no basis whatsoever for these allegations against Mr Kinnock. Without exception we withdraw the allegations and criticisms of Mr Kinnock and apologise to him.

In recognition of the seriousness of the allegations against Mr Kinnock and the complete absence of any justification for them, we have agreed to make a substantial payment in damages to Mr Kinnock.

EYE TV

Ford Super Sunday (Sky Sports One)
The Alan Clark Diaries (BBC4)
New Year's Day Concert From Vienna (BBC4)
What Not To Wear (BBC3)

DEEP into its second decade of transmission, Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB surely stands as the least original television network ever invented. A glance at the multi-channel top 10 for a week late this year shows that the only BSkyB programmes with any sort of audience are the live premiership football in Ford Super Sunday (0.92 million viewers) and six episodes of *The Simpsons* (ranging from 0.69 to 0.99). They don't even have the top slot, which goes to ITV2's *Pop Idol Extra*.

This means BskyB's entire broadcasting strategy depends on corporate synergy – Murdoch's Fox network in America owns *The Simpsons* – and sporting blackmail: extorting huge sums from football supporters for matches they used to see for free.

Well, Bart will still be coming through for Rupe in 2004 but the soccer blackmail strategy is in serious trouble. Now that European competition legislation has forced eight live matches on to terrestrial networks next year, with a much more radical redistribution due in 2006, Sky One's single unique selling point has disappeared.

Even with *The Simpsons*, poorer or puritanical viewers had the option of waiting for transmission on BBC2 (or, soon, Channel 4) but, for live premiership football it was Murdoch or nothing. Now, in a move which helps explain the Murdoch newspapers' obsessive opposition to the European Union, Brussels has red-carded the whole project of holding football hostage.

Most of the newspaper coverage has concentrated on the likely consequences for the game if BSkyB pays much less money for its non-exclusive coverage. But the effects on television are just as interesting. Unless Channel 4 were banned for a year from showing documentaries about pornography, it's hard to imagine a move which could so destabilise an entire broadcaster. Without exclusive live football, BSkyB has almost no reason to exist or charge its exorbitant subscriptions. What Rupe and his son the chairman come up with as an alternative is going to be one of the most interesting television stories of the new year.

However, the crisis of identity at the younger television channels is wider. Newspaper coverage reports that the hot present of Yule 2003 is the Freeview set-top box which allows multi-channel television without lining Rupert's pockets. Leaving aside the that the box was also widely publicised as the big gift of Christmas 2002, it has been widely written that this is the coming of digital television.

Whether or not that's true, it's clear that the BBC's digital channels still have serious problems of content. As pointed out in the last Eye, BBC3 is now, for reasons of editorial confusion and budgetary crisis, filling its slots with trash or repeats.

There's no sign of a new year's resolution. The network's big 1 January offering is a repeat of the **What Not To Wear** special, already seen on BBC2, in which Trinny and Tranny sorted out David Baddiel's trousers. The night before, it's repeats of *Two Pints Of Lager And A Packet Of Crisps* and *Dead Ringers*.

Whatever BBC3 was supposed to be – a subject over which many politicians and executives argued – it clearly wasn't set up as a sort of BBC2 Bronze, showing so-so repeats. In the case of that channel at least, buying a Freeview box means viewing again shows you've already purchased with the licence-fee.

And, showing how fraught the digital revolution will be, BBC4 suffers from the opposite problem that it does have good and original stuff in the schedules. For example, **The Alan Clark Diaries**, in which John Hurt plays the Tory Pepys. This drama has had more media coverage than many productions on mainstream channels. Unfortunately, Hurt has given interviews suggesting that they would have been given more time and money if it had been on a proper channel and viewers and critics instantly demand to know why, if this is so good, it isn't being premiered on BBC2. There seems to be almost nothing the channel can do to end the perception that it exists as the reserves to the first-team of BBC2.

This perception damages the channel both ways. While *The Alan Clark Diaries* is seen as meriting promotion, something like the **New Year's Day Concert From Vienna**, which always used to be on BBC2, is seen to have been relegated. A channel can exist in relationship to another one – the early Channel 4 was a reaction against the then BBC2 – but only if it's seen as superior. The struggle for BBC4 during 2004 is to stop being seen as the Second XI.

But, for the first time ever, it's Rupert Murdoch who enters a new television year with the biggest problems. What do you do if you lose your football exclusivity and everything else you have is balls?

'Remote Controller'

WORLD OF HYPE

NOT all the perfumes of Araby can sweeten the name of Conrad Black's scandal-wracked business empire now. But perhaps Tim Bell can.

According to the *Grauniad*, the appointment of the former coke-sniffer as Hollinger's PR adviser "marked a turning point in one of the most engrossing media stories in recent years. A battle-hardened spinner, who earned his spurs as Lady Thatcher's PR guru when she was at No 10, Lord Bell has the credentials to restore some lustre to Hollinger's tarnished reputation."

Of course. But why didn't the *Guardian* cite any other clients who have been sprinkled with Tinker Bell's fairy-dust? Margaret Thatcher is certainly not the only beneficiary: Bell also offered PR advice to her son Mark, making him the much-loved figure he is today. Another satisfied customer was BBC director-general John Birt, transformed from croak-voiced Dalek to national teddy-bear thanks to the lustre-monger.

True, not all his efforts have been so successful. During the miners' strike of the mid-1980s Bell was asked to improve the image of the coal board chairman Ian McGregor, and came up with the brilliant idea that he should wear white suits to hide his dandruff. Alas, McGregor's reputation plummeted still further. Bell was retained by Ernest Saunders of Guinness, who – alas again! – went to jail soon afterwards. He advised the head of Nissan UK, Octav Botnar – who then fled to Switzerland to avoid being questioned by Scotland Yard about £97m in unpaid taxes.

In 1990, during Chile's first democratic elections since the 1973 *coup*, Bell was employed to promote General Pinochet's favoured candidate, Herman Buchi – who duly lost. In 1992, buffeted by the Antonia de Sancha scandal, David Mellor turned to Tim Bell for help – and duly lost his job. A year later Bell flew to South Africa at the behest of President de Klerk to mastermind the general election campaign for the National Party – which duly lost. In 1994 Bell advised John Major to mark the 50th anniversary of D-Day with a "fun day" of spam-frying contests – an idea that was duly "lost" after angry protests from D-Day veterans and Dame Vera Lynn.

Still, it would be absurd to suggest that Bell always backs losers. In 1999 he was hired to promote the PPP plan for the London underground, which duly won the hearts and minds of everyone in the capital. And only a few weeks ago, on 26 October, he wrote an adulatory open letter to the "vote-winning" Iain Duncan Smith in the *Independent on Sunday*. "Dear Iain," it began, "You are the right man to lead the Conservative Party into the next general election…"

6.00 BREAKFAST (T)(S) (981826).
9.00 KILROY (T): New series (rpt.) (S); **BBC News; Weather** (11555).

Daily Mail

AD NAUSEAM

The Blunt Pencil Awards 2003

SOME say advertising is still in recession, others that we've never had it so good. But at least everyone agrees on one thing: 2003 has been another bumper year for rank bad advertising.

Given that agencies' new business performance was roundly appalling in 2003, it seems churlish to pick a worst performer from so many duds. But pick we must; and so agency of the year goes to **McCann Erickson**.

Eye 1086 reported on the hiring of Rupert Howell, an adland legend who, since the collapse of his "Growth Organisation" (sic) consultancy after just three months, seems to have lost his golden touch. That didn't put off McCann's, which not only hired him but gave him free rein to hire top creative Robert Campbell and Howell's old mugger, Robin Price.

Names like that don't come cheap, so McCann's need some big accounts fast. Instead it's been losing work at an impressive rate: Somerfield, Coca-Cola and Greene King all jumped ship this year and Bird's Eye, Bacardi Breezer and Glenfiddich are "under review".

This year's special **lifetime non-achievement award** goes to **the entire advertising industry**. In a year when even Britain's beleaguered manufacturers showed signs of recovery, adland remained mired in recession. Adspend continues to drop, with the latest figures showing a 2.6 percent year-on-year fall. But one thing remains constant: the parties.

Though adspend is in freefall, several agencies have found the money to throw lavish beanfeasts for more than 500 of their closest friends. **Rainey Kelly Campbell Roalfe** topped the bill in every sense with a shindig for 900 – tough luck for those who were sacked last year.

Finally we come to the most keenly sought after Blunt Pencil for the **Most Nauseating Ad of 2003**. Big US firms were on top form, with **McDonald's** claiming its fries were good for you (banned) and signing up teen celebs like Justin Timberlake to get teenagers to scoff burgers. In a similar vein **Coca-Cola** boasted how for more than 40 years it has upheld a policy of no advertising to under 12s. Oh yeah? A week later it announced a deal to sponsor the UK's pop charts in association with the BBC. **Gap** deserves a nod too for laying waste to a respectable advertising heritage by signing up **Madonna** and **Missy Elliot**. The outcome was risible: all three parties should keep a tape as a *memento mori*.

Back on this side of the pond in the financial sector, **Standard Life**, **Norwich Union** ("Quote Me Happy", anyone?) and **Barclays** all got readers' backs up. But **Abbey National** took the laurels. In 2003 it spent £30m, dropped the word "National", and announced that it was "turning banking on its head". That tagline took on a whole new meaning three weeks ago when Abbey was fined more than £2m for breaching money-laundering and fund management regulations.

But we're running over time now… and there's so much more to be said. One thinks of atrocities committed in the name of **Curry's** by Linda Barker, anything for **Wrigley's**, the **Ford Focus** on a cliff top guiding a fishing boat home – and of course **Barnardo's**, whose latest ads have been banned (as predicted ad nauseam in, er, Ad Nauseam).

The joint winners must be the **telecoms industry** for blighting last summer with the directory inquiries fiasco. Between them they spent more than £150m on marketing, yet in the case of 118 118, neglected to install systems that could cope with the demand they set out to generate. A happy new year to them all.

N. Wheelie Bin Covers

Blend in your bin - or make a feature of it. Four self-adhesive panels, which are really easy to apply, turn a wheelie bin eyesore into an object of desire.

Catalogue

I-SKY

"'YOU NEED THIS IN YOUR LIFE.' — The Times, October 2003"

— Quote from *Times* (prop: R. Murdoch) on advertising material for Sky+ (prop: R. Murdoch) supplied with copies of the Sun (prop: R.Murdoch)

DUMB BRITAIN

Judgemental, BBC1

Nick Knowles: Which island was awarded the George Cross during the Second World War?

Contestant: France.

The Weakest Link, BBC2

Anne Robinson: What "T" is a novel by Irvine Welsh featuring the characters Begbie, Renton and Sick Boy?

Contestant: Treasure Island.

Robinson: What "T" is a term for both an item of underwear and also a rising column of warm air?

Contestant: Turtle.

Today With Des and Mel, ITV

Mel: You are eating a baklava. Are you having a main course or a pudding?

Contestant: A starter.

O TEMPORA O MORES

IN 1992 video footage of a donkey attempting to have sex with a half-naked man was shown on Channel 4's late-night "ground-breaking" youth programme *The Word* as part of a "too rude for mainstream TV" home video slot.

Fast forward to 2003, and the same video footage is being shown on *Rhona's Rudest Home Videos*, broadcast on ITV in prime time on a Saturday night.

LUVVIES

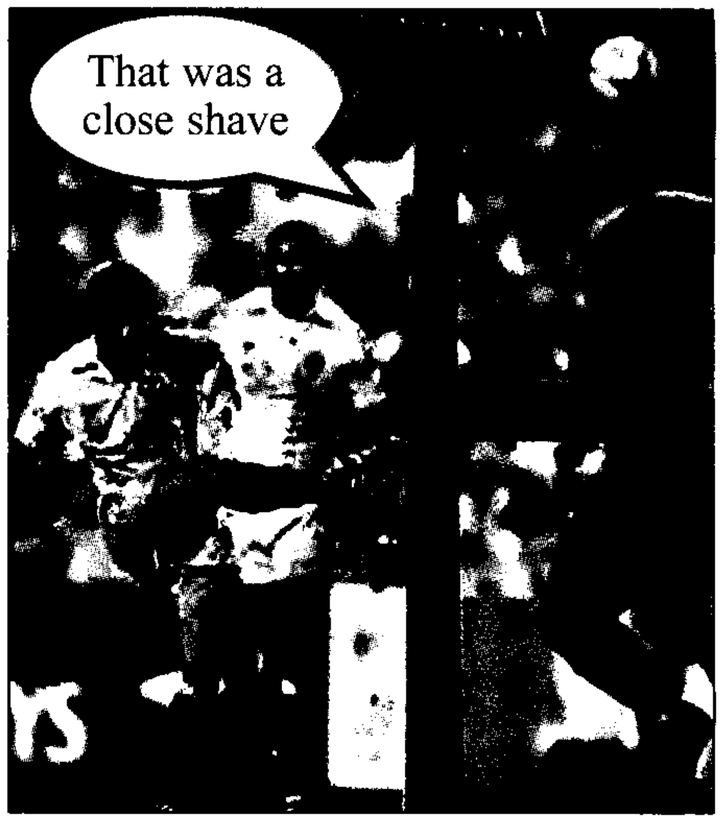
Horrocks points out that she has imposed her own structure and superstitions on this space. "There are certain things that need to be here," she says, gesturing to a white towel that belongs to her four-year-old daughter, Molly. "This has to be folded just so." And if it isn't? "I'm loosening up about it. I can see that if I rearrange the towel, then something interesting might happen tonight. It's nice to put in some danger when you're doing a long run. I've got to keep scaring myself. I've got to get my heart beating." ***The Independent***

Submitted by Fiona Allen.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore



Jonny Wilkinson Sword

JUST FANCY THAT!

THE Chinese-made "Freedom Cards" which featured Condoleezza Rice as the Queen of Spades (see Warballs, *Eye* 1094) have been trumped by *Eye* reader Lee McCauley.

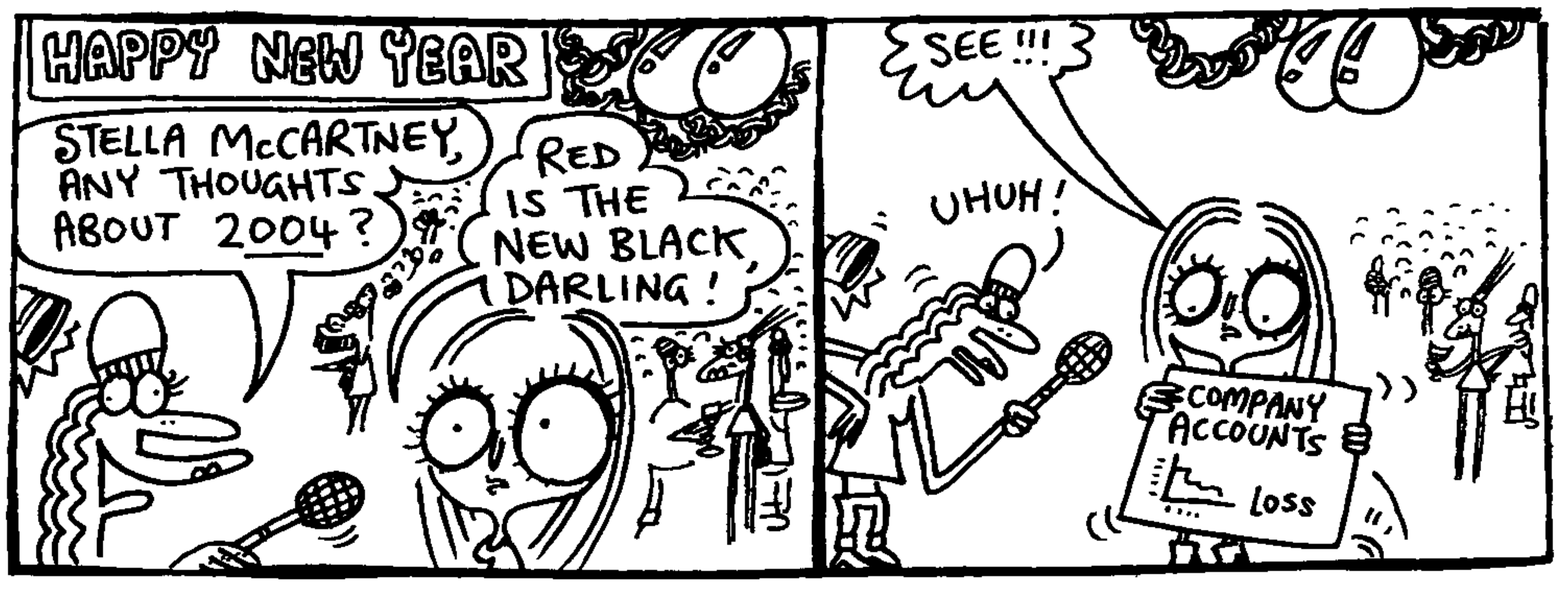
He recently bought a set of "Operation Iraqi Freedom: Heroes of War" playing cards, manufactured in Taiwan, which seem to have something of a medical preoccupation. Not only does Tony Blair (who was recently treated for heart problems) feature as the King of Hearts, but the US secretary of state, who last week underwent surgery for prostate cancer, appears on the Ace of Hearts as "Colon Powell".

Rugbyballs

"I make no apologies for choosing a picture of the English rugby union flyhalf, Jonny Wilkinson, to adorn the front cover of *QW*. This isn't a gratuitous shot of the man who sealed the greatest team sporting victory England has seen in nearly 40 years. It is more a recognition that inspirational leadership, guts, teamwork, solid preparation and backbreaking hard work can achieve wondrous things. Maybe the connection between this victory and the business improvement tool ISO 9001:2000 is slightly tenuous, but…" — Editorial in *Quality World*, magazine of the Institute of Quality Assurance.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER



DOING THE ROUNDS

MD on MMR

"I'M SORRY to say I'm none the wiser," said parent Michelle Ellis at the end of Channel 5's much-trailed but not much watched MMR debate. So was it worth the effort?

No representative from "new" Labour saw fit to appear, believing the weight of evidence supporting the safety and value of the vaccine is beyond dispute. No need for further discussion, research or single vaccines – the answers are all up on the department of health website. (www.doh.gov.uk/mmr/index.html)

The fact that a substantial minority of parents (42 percent in one area of London) refuse to swallow the safety argument does not bode well for the government's new "choice agenda", where parents and patients are seen as experts in their own needs and preferences. If they can't understand what the government considers to be the most clear-cut argument in favour of MMR, how will they cope with the far more complex choices that surround many other treatments? At present, half of all patients don't bother taking prescribed long-term medication, at huge cost to the taxpayer.

Patients tend not to start or stick with treatment if they can't see the benefit, and the army of "non-compliers" were heartened last month when Dr Allen Roses, a vice-president at Glaxo Smith-Kline, admitted that: "The vast majority of drugs – more than 90 percent of them – only work in 30-50 percent of patients." The trouble is, they don't know which 30-50 percent. Dr Roses believes genetics will eventually provide the answer and fortunately for GSK, it has the money to put into research.

Alas, no drug company wants to pay to discover if there's a genetically vulnerable subset of children who develop an atypical form of autism and an unusual bowel disease following MMR vaccination, and clinical research in the UK is so poorly-funded that trials set up to answer that specific question have yet to be done. However, the epidemiological trials show that if such a vulnerable subset does exist, it has thus far evaded statistical detection.

In the meantime, the government has to reconcile its target culture, where it pays doctors according to the numbers of patients it screens and treats, with the increasing evidence that many patients don't benefit, and may even be harmed, by screening and treatment. The more patients are informed, the more they may realise the limits of medicine, opt out of treatment, cost their GP and embarrass their MP.

Ironically vaccination (along with contraception) is one of the few preventative treatments that really works, and I was convinced enough by the safety of MMR to have both my children jabbed. But in the "new" Labour world of choice, it seems absurd that parents aren't offered single vaccines. They're not as effective as MMR, and we have less safety data on them; but the NHS is riddled with examples of patients being offered less effective treatments than others (usually on cost grounds). Certainly single vaccination is better than none – starting with measles.

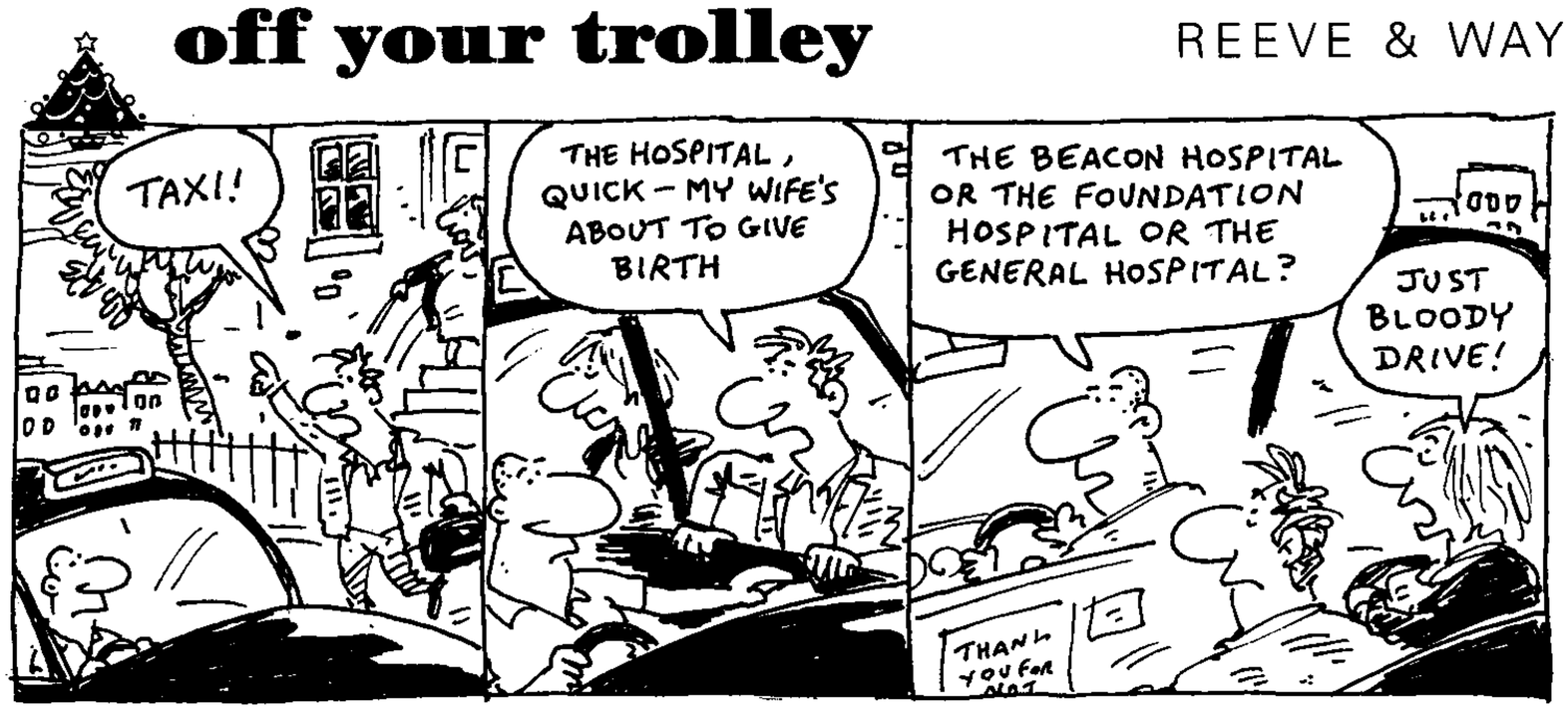
The government fears that backtracking would be seen as an admission of defeat, confidence in the vaccine programme would collapse and more children would be infection-damaged. But had it not been so dogmatic to start with, the increasingly acrimonious debate could have been defused.

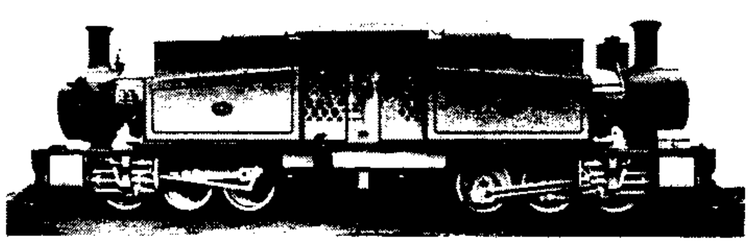
In France, single vaccines are available; but the take-up of the triple vaccine is still very good because parents dislike subjecting their children to six jabs. Choice and the ideal of the common good happily co-exist. In the UK, health secretary John "Oh fuck, not health" Reid blathers on about the importance of choice being extended to all, and yet the poor are denied the option of single vaccines that the rich can afford, and are more likely to be damaged by measles.

M.D.

off your trolley

REEVE & WAY


TAXI!
THE HOSPITAL, QUICK – MY WIFE'S ABOUT TO GIVE BIRTH
THE BEACON HOSPITAL OR THE FOUNDATION HOSPITAL OR THE GENERAL HOSPITAL?
JUST BLOODY DRIVE!
THANK YOU FOR



SIGNAL FAILURES

AN *Eye* reader wanting to catch the last Weymouth-London train on 24 November made the mistake of checking South West Trains' website, where he learned the train was diverted "due to earlier engineering works" and would skip all 41 intermediate station stops, including Bournemouth and Southampton.

SWT told the *Eye* the website had shown incorrect information because of "simple human error". But the reader, who frequently uses SWT, didn't even suspect a mistake. "SWT is omitting stops to compensate for delay as never before, and passengers who get in the way are thrown off or left stranded," he grumbled.

Such practice typifies an industry serving itself rather than its customers. The government demands better performance statistics, and omitting stops gives a late train a better chance of starting its next journey on time. SWT even uses that tactic on services rebranded for London's new "Overground Network", which promises "consistent standards for service frequency" and at least four off-peak trains per hour for each station.

One 73-year-old woman who took those promises at face value was surprised when her ON train, delayed by faulty doors, raced through her destination and dumped her at Waterloo station in the evening rush-hour. She was 90 minutes late getting home after what should have been a nine-mile journey, but SWT had gained a few minutes for its official records. So that was all right then.

'Dr B. Ching'

ROAD RAGE

ONE reason the new M6 relief road cleared its public inquiry was that, with the promised toll charge of just £5 a lorry, it was supposed to take a lot of traffic off the M6 around spaghetti junction.

Now the road is open, however, the charge for cars has risen slightly from £2.50 to £3 but the charge for lorries has more than doubled to £11 (once a £1-per-vehicle introductory discount ends). As a result, many truckers will stick with the old, publicly-funded M6 instead.

A survey by the Freight Transport Association found that with tolls at £10 per lorry, just 4 percent of trucking firms would always use the new road and only 31 percent planned to use it when the alternative motorway was congested. Having lobbied 20 years for the relief road, the FTA felt obliged to ignore the survey when the road opened and issued a press release entitled "M6 toll – welcome from industry".

The government, scared of the political repercussions of introducing systematic road charges to reduce congestion and raise cash for transport improvements, likes this kind of road toll. The M6 relief road charges are the responsibility of the road's owner, Midland Expressway Limited (MEL), and any complaints will be addressed to them, not to Alistair Darling.

Profits from the tolls won't go towards general transport improvements but to the company's own bank account and shareholders. MEL is jointly owned by Macquarie Infrastructure Group (MIG), one of Australia's biggest companies, and Italian road firm Autostrade SpA. And deterring truckers from the new road with a hefty toll will save the companies money on maintenance (one lorry can cause as much wear and tear as 100,000 cars) and so maximise profits from cars.

Meanwhile the ageing M6 will take the strain of heavy lorry traffic. No wonder MIG says the new road is one of the "most strategically attractive toll roads in the world".

'Hedgehog'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS AWARDS 2003

WELCOME to the Keepmoat House motel and conference centre, Basingstoke, this year's venue for the Rotten Boroughs Awards (RBAs) – the most glittering occasion in the local government calendar. In today's fast-changing world, those who succeed move with the times and accept the challenge of shaping tomorrow's customer-centred environment. The RBAs celebrate the achievements of those who strive tirelessly to provide inspirational leadership with clear vision and sharp focus, dynamically managing change while remembering, always, that people are our priority. *(Cliches* © Municipal Journal *job ads.)*

SOME say the art of political debate is dead. But not for the winners of the **Edmund Burke Award for Political Debate in Essex**. Step forward **London Borough of Havering** councillors **Jeff Tucker** and **Alby Tebbutt**. Tucker, of the Residents Party, waved a Bible and a pair of boxing gloves at Tebbutt in the council chamber, after claiming that the Tory had threatened him with a baseball bat and falsely accused him of tearing down Conservative election posters in Romford. Tucker told the *Eye*: "He told me I had a war on my hands." Tebbutt told us: "He's a bleedin' liar."

Communication, of course, is an important tool in the hands of today's e-aware local authorities. The **Award for Plain English** goes to **Herefordshire county council**, which, when asked why it had flogged off a raft of services, from highway maintenance to catering, to Jarvis plc for £270m without consulting staff or taxpayers, replied: "The contract was let under the European Union negotiation procedure for contract procurement using the exemption provided by Article 7, paragraph 2(C)… on a balanced scorecard of price, quality and business excellence."

Press Release of the Year, meanwhile, is awarded to the Tories in **Huddersfield** who issued a release savaging the government's "crazy" pension credit scheme, accompanied by a photograph of concerned **Kirklees** Tory councillor **Rob Light** and a "worried pensioner". Those who received the photograph as an email attachment were also able to read its electronic tagline: "Robandfogie.jpg".

THERE was a strong focus on communication, too, at Labour-run **Tower Hamlets**, Britain's most deprived borough, which last year spent £9m on "consultants", some of whom were on £900 a day.

The council, winner of the RBA **For Services to Consultancy**, employed a PR person on £130,000 a year specially to handle press inquiries about an alleged multi-million pound fraud. And just before Christmas Tower Hamlets council leader **Helal Abbas** accepted a 49 percent increase in his allowances, backdated to June, which will rise to 83 percent over four years. Meanwhile the leader of the Lib-Dem opposition has had her allowance frozen. Mr Abbas duly becomes the worthy winner of our **Brass-necked Councillor of the Year** award. And for overall **Services to the PR Industry,** the **London borough of Greenwich,** for employing 47 spin-doctors, more than any other council in the country.

PR stunt of the year: Back in April businesspersons Carol and Jerry Walsingham waxed lyrical in a glossy magazine, *Spa*, "supported" by **Bath and Northeast Somerset** council (Banes) about the Indian head massages, organic chicken salads and other trendy delights they had enjoyed during a day spent at Bath's newly-opened Spa. The only problem was that the £27m millennium project hadn't opened at all. And it still hasn't. Three-and-a-half years late, with nine opening dates missed and no one daring to set another, Bath Spa is a worthy winner of our **Millennium White Elephant** award.

Quotes of the Year

"Beware of the Brotherhood" – former North Wales fraud squad chief Peter Roberts to Flintshire county council's former internal auditor Andy Sutton.

"I was being offered so many bribes that I stopped recording them" – South Northants council's former taxi licensing officer, Tony Lane.

"They aren't even nice biscuits" – Brighton & Hove councillor, on hearing an allegation that every plate of biccies supplied for council meetings by contractor Ecovert cost the taxpayer £14.

PHILISTINES of the Year: Liverpool city council, for selling off most of its music library while celebrating its nomination as European "capital of culture" 2008. **Special Award For Health Promotion: To Bath and Northeast Somerset council,** which in March banned children from bringing footballs to school because they were dangerous. Runner-up: **Leeds city council,** which gave away half-price lunchtime swimming vouchers, then announced the closure of Leeds's only city centre pool.

BRITAIN'S councillors are staunch supporters of the motor industry, from **Doncaster** mayor **Martin Winter**, who maintains standards in the Beacon of Sleaze by driving around in a £26,000 Mercedes emblazoned with advertising for a local car dealer, to **Lincolnshire county council** chairman **Peter Bray**, who turned down a top-of-the-range Rover as his official car because it didn't match up to the "dignity of the office". He chose to spend twice as much (taxpayers') money on a Prescott-style Jaguar XJ6 instead. But there can only be one winner of the **Two Jags Award for Appropriate Use of an Official Motor Vehicle.** Step forward the former mayor of **Barnsley, Peter Doyle**, who sent his chauffeured council limo to the police station to pick up his son, who had been helping Inspector Knacker with inquiries into a Saturday lunchtime pub brawl, in order to give said son a lift to Barnsley FC's ground in time for the 3pm kick-off.

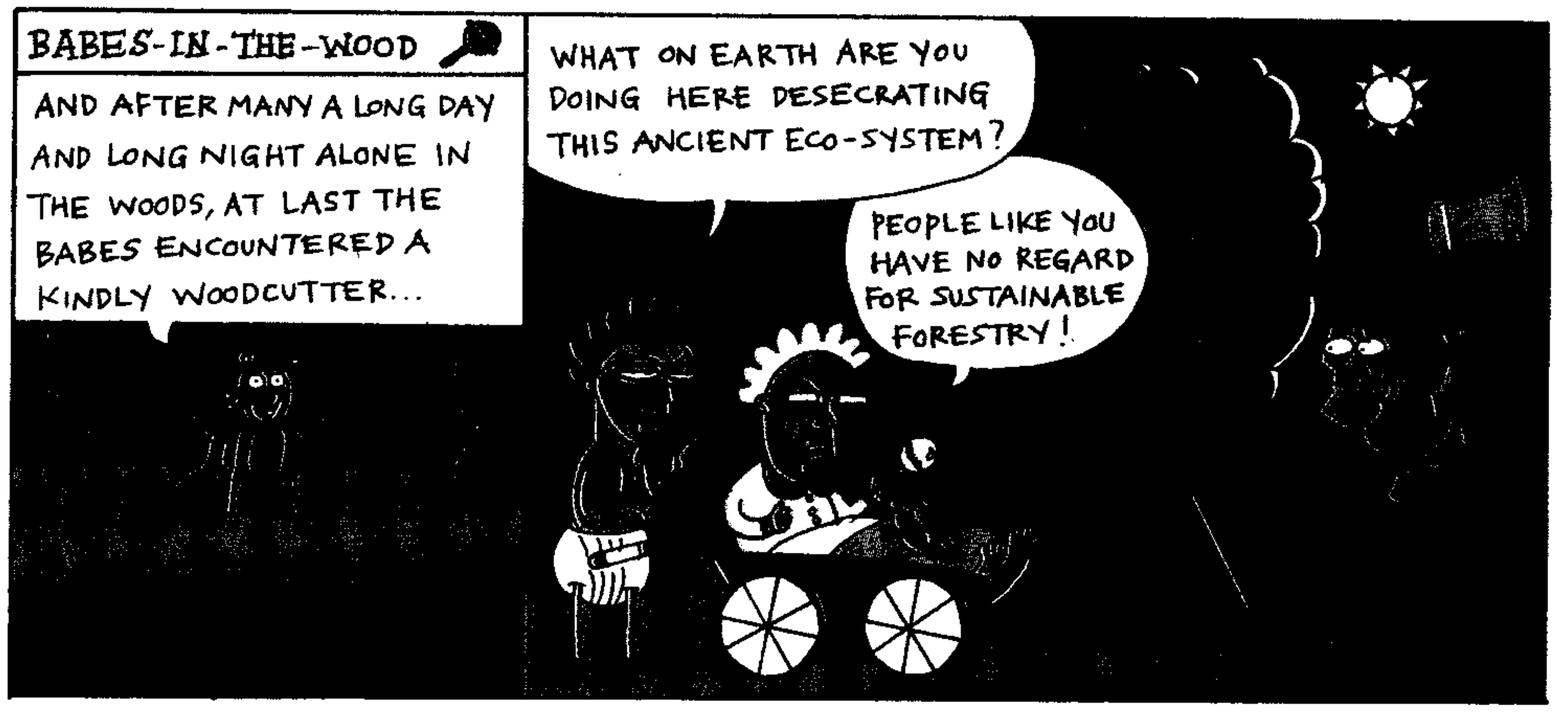
THE ADVENT of public-private partnerships has brought greater flexibility to our education system. We are proud, then, to announce that our **Head Teacher of the Year** award goes to the **London Borough of Southwark**'s John Mann, who attained brief fame for his brainwave of recruiting teachers from the former Soviet Union. The gloss came off the scheme when it turned out he and his wife were actually running an agency specialising in introducing "young Russian ladies" to lovelorn English chaps, and he lost his job. But full marks for blue-sky thinking, John!

ROTTEN BOROUGHS' **Man of the Year** – and we're not joking – is taxi driver **Dennis Edwards**, who was taken to court by **Milton Keynes council** for alleging that the council's taxi licensing department had been corrupted by an organised crime gang from Glasgow which controlled a large local cab firm. The harassment case against Edwards was kicked out by a judge, who ordered police to investigate his allegations thoroughly. This they are allegedly doing. Edwards continues his campaign, despite regular death threats. **Council of the year**: Labour-controlled **Hull city council**, which in a few short years managed to blow its multi-million pound windfall from the sell-off of its own phone company, Kingston Communications, and became one of Britain's 10 worst-performing councils.

NO SUCH THING As A Free Lunch Award: to tiny Bramham parish council in West Yorkshire, which accepted 200 free tickets, worth £95 each, to a rock festival that it had initially tried to block. **Thespian of the Year**: **Martin Winter,** mayor of **Doncaster,** who signed up for a course at Rada in order to more convincingly bullshit on behalf of the Beacon of Sleaze. **Book of the Year**: Durham cobbler Tony Martin's forthcoming tome on his battles against the city council.

COURT TRIUMPH of the Year (1): the staying by a judge in August of two further trumped-up food safety cases by East Northants district council (ENDC) against publican Geoff "Mouldy Ham" Monks, the council already having ruined Monks's business and his health after he had crossed the wrong people in this redneck backwater. **Court Triumph of the Year (2)**: when, on 11 December, magistrates kicked out a vindictive attempt by ENDC to have Monks imprisoned for the second time over unpaid costs. Trebles and ham sandwiches all round!

+GRIM PANTO+


BABES-IN-THE-WOOD
AND AFTER MANY A LONG DAY AND LONG NIGHT ALONE IN THE WOODS, AT LAST THE BABES ENCOUNTERED A KINDLY WOODCUTTER...
WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU DOING HERE DESECRATING THIS ANCIENT ECO-SYSTEM?
PEOPLE LIKE YOU HAVE NO REGARD FOR SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY!

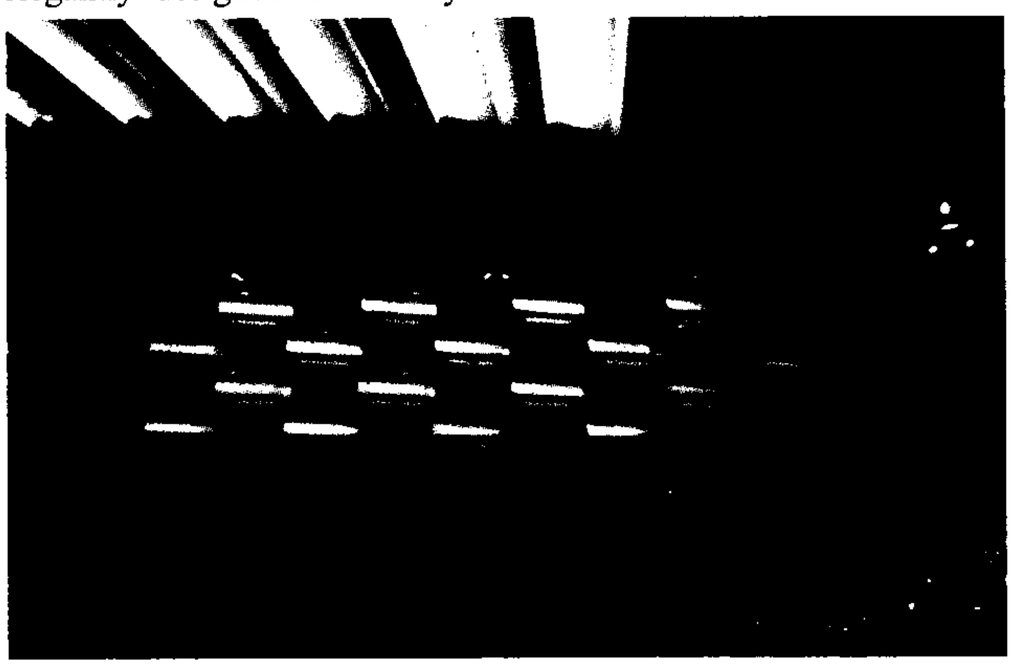
CINDERELLA
AND SO ON THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT CINDERELLA'S FABULOUS COACH AND HORSES TURNED BACK INTO ITS ORIGINAL STATE
WOE IS ME! HOW EVER WILL I GET HOME?
WHY WORRY ABOUT THAT WHEN WE CAN WHIP UP A WONDERFUL ORGANIC PUMPKIN AND FENNEL BROTH FROM YOUR "COACH AND HORSES"?

NOOKS & CORNERS

THIS CHRISTMAS I write in defence of an unlikely masterpiece: the Royal Festival Hall, the first largescale example of modern architecture in London and the only post-war building to be listed grade I.

Intended to give London a first-rate large concert hall to replace the bombed Queen's Hall, it was a central element in (and the only survivor of) the Festival of Britain. Although the building is flawed – it was never finished and the front was later altered by the Greater London Council – the interior is superb.

Because the essential concept was "an egg in a box", the staircases and foyers flow around and under the auditorium: it is the easiest place to get an interval drink in Britain. All the details – handrails, carpets, doors, panelling, etc – survive and are elegantly designed in the style of that humane



modernism typical of that now distant era.

The Festival Hall also matters historically and symbolically as it expresses the spirit of 1951 and the Festival of Britain, that heroic, poignant exhibition intended to revitalise a victorious but exhausted nation. It was typical of the time that the building was a collaborative effort so that historians now argue about who really designed it (there were the two official London county council architects, Leslie Martin and Robert Matthew, and many younger architects working under Peter Moro, the brilliant exile from Nazism).

Equally important, it was intended to be accessible and popular, not remote and elitist: the culture it was to sustain was for everyone. This compelling myth of community is why Tony Blair used the building for the Labour party's victory party after the 1997 election, and why – on its 50th birthday – he wrote that: "The Royal Festival Hall continues to keep alive the spirit of the Festival of Britain." For all these reasons, it is a building which many people care deeply about.

Given the above it would be very wrong to spoil this great and – yes – *beautiful* building. The architects Allies and Morrison have been engaged to restore and improve parts of the interior, and that is fine. But the South Bank Centre wants to make changes as well. It wants to do away with the original long, central bar under the auditorium (designed by Robin Day) on the grounds that steps down make it difficult for disabled access. Yet this is a popular and much used amenity at the heart of the building. English Heritage, incomprehensibly and stupidly, has agreed to this. But worst of all is what is proposed for the auditorium itself.

Acoustics was for long an uncertain science and one in which fashions change; but there is no doubt the acoustic of the Festival Hall has long been controversial. In 1996 the acoustician, Larry Kirkegaard, was hired to look at it and he declared war on the timber in the auditorium, arguing that it absorbs too much sound and contributes to the unpopular "dry" acoustic. His solutions to these problems have informed the refurbishment programme and they are radical.

Side walls are going to be moved and resited to enlarge the stage; other walls and ceilings are going to be rebuilt, sometimes behind the existing finishes. But what is visually disastrous is the proposal to remove the large stepped and splayed timber canopy which hangs dramatically over the organ and the orchestra platform. This is an integral part of the conception of the auditorium and its clever design, influenced by wartime developments in plywood (notably the construction of the De Havilland *Mosquito* aeroplane), is enjoyably characteristic of the 1951 aesthetic.

Removal of the canopy will wreck the interior, especially as it is to be replaced by a "permeable reflector" with pivoted, movable sections made of white fabric. The distinguished architect Trevor Dannatt, who worked on the original building, has rightly compared the proposals to removing the choir stalls and high altar from a cathedral.

Acoustics are not the whole story: the South Bank board wants to hang sets or "overhead facilities" from the ceiling for stage performances, and the existing canopy precludes that. This suggests that the brief is wrong and that the South Bank board should think (yet) again.

WITHIN a week of my piece on the monstrous redevelopment proposals for South Kensington station (Eye 1094), the planning application was withdrawn by Stanhope plc (chairman and majority shareholder: Sir Stuart Lipton). Hooray!

Since then CABE – the Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment (chairman: Sir Stuart Lipton) – has felt obliged to issue a carefully worded press release explaining how, "because he holds both offices, we are scrupulously careful to ensure there is no conflict of interest in any project or debate… Sir Stuart plays no part in the Design Review Committee process…" Well, of course not.

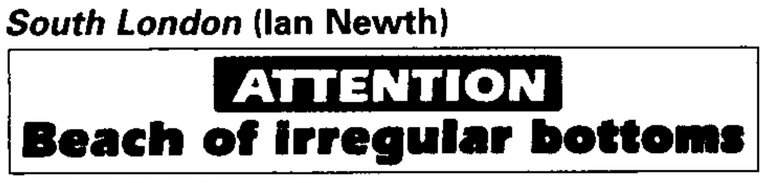
The press release admits that, a year ago, "CABE's feedback on the proposals was broadly favourable." Indeed it was: the architect was told that the committee "offers its warm support". It will be interesting to read CABE's advice on Stanhope plc's next, revised scheme to make a few improvements to South Kensington station by plonking a massive office and residential development on top.

'Piloti'

I-SPY

£10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs*

South London **(Ian Newth)**



Spain **(Eric Russell)**

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

ANYONE with a nose for it can smell despair in the corridors of the Royal College of Music. Moreover, it's gathering strength as staff and students leave for Christmas with the prospect that there may be nothing for them to come back to in the new year.

Dame Janet Ritterman, the less than popular director, has just announced that most of the RCM's salaried teaching staff are likely to be made redundant in 2004 and invited to reapply for their jobs on a freelance basis. At a stroke, some of the most eminent teaching musicians in the country will be without regular work, and some of the most promising young players in the country without regular tuition.

It's the latest in a round of cutbacks and there are now fewer individual instrumental lessons available to RCM students than at any point in the college's 120-year history.

Dame Janet's explanation for this extraordinary decline is that it's all an unavoidable response to changes in the way the Higher Education Funding Council for England distributes money to university-status music colleges: in the academic year 2003/4 the RCM's grant has been reduced by 0.5 percent.

But this reduction hasn't been applied across the board. The Royal Academy of Music and Royal Northern College, Leeds, have both received a modest increase; while down-river at Greenwich, Trinity College of Music has received a massive 79.7 percent increase thanks to the persistence of its pushy but effective principal Gavin Henderson. All of which begs questions about why the RCM has fared so badly and why the similarly pushy but not so effective Ritterman has allowed it to happen.

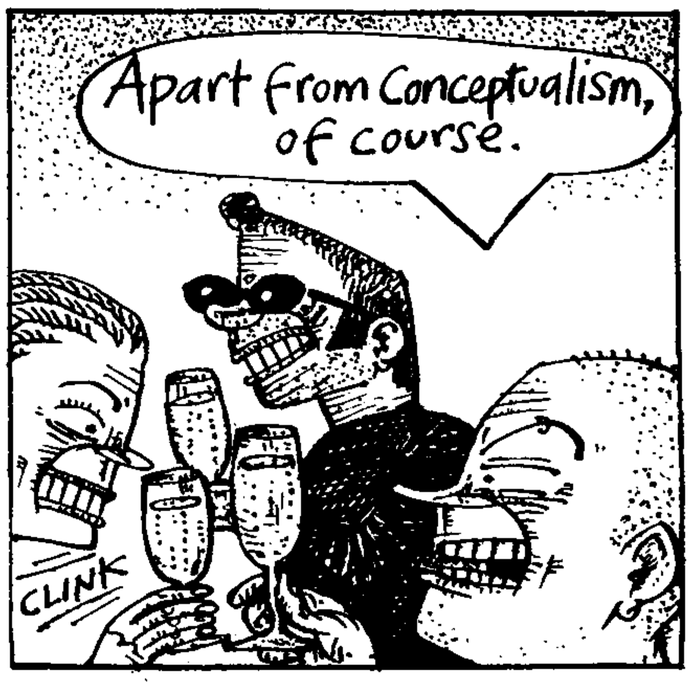
Ritterman's artistic judgement has come under fire ever since she took the job.

Worse is the college's grimly accumulating debt.

When Dame J told her soon-to-be-sacked teachers that "we all feel the pain and suffer together" there were raised eyebrows. Janet's lieutenants - the administrative managers who account for half the annual salary budget – will not be touched by the redundancies; and Dame J has just awarded herself a handsome pay increase of £14,000, taking her salary to £120,000.

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH



PRISON NEWS

EVEN though the damages paid to inmates who suffered beatings, assaults, death threats and mock hangings at Wormwood Scrubs has risen to a staggering £1.7m, home secretary David Blunkett has still not ordered a public inquiry into the scandal at the London jail which went unchecked for five years.

Dire warnings from two chief inspectors of prisons – the late Sir Stephen Tumin in 1994, and his successor Sir David Ramsbotham in 1996 – were ignored.

Eye readers will recall that between the end of 1992 and 1999, dozens of inmates claimed they had been subjected to extreme brutality, resulting in some cases in severe injury. The claims triggered one of the largest-ever criminal investigations into staff activity at any English jail. Twenty-seven prison officers were charged with attacking inmates. Six were initially jailed, but three acquitted on appeal. Most were cleared, but many more, interviewed under caution, were not even charged.

Since then 51 inmates have sued the home office over allegations including rape. Last week, the *Guardian* disclosed that a six-figure sum – the biggest amount so far – was paid to the inmate alleging rape. Although the home office denies this allegation, it admits he had been beaten repeatedly by officers and had a noose placed around his neck.

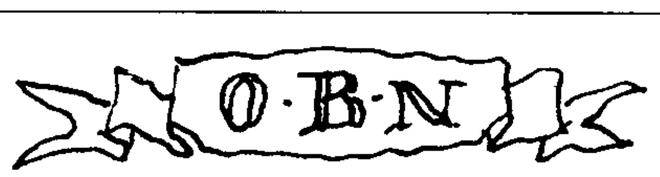
Another prisoner, the *Eye* has learnt, was beaten on three consecutive days. On the first occasion his teeth were knocked out as a "punishment" for offering a witness statement in support of an inmate who had been repeatedly beaten and subjected to a mock execution. This beating took place in July 1998 – weeks after the police investigation had started. In order to escape the beatings, the 30-year-old inmate slashed his wrist and was moved to the hospital wing.

But despite each settlement of damages, no one has yet ascertained the full extent of the jail's violent culture; how it took root and whether it persists. No one has established at what level of management it was known about and what other agencies – probation, medical, prison official visitors, court and escort staff – may also have been aware that something was seriously amiss.

Daniel Machover, lawyer for many of the inmates, has repeatedly called for a public inquiry. But Blunkett resists, saying it would be premature while six civil cases have yet to be resolved.

They are almost certain to be settled out of court and will not answer wider questions. What is known is that yet another internal inquiry has been launched – this time to prepare for any legal claim for "systemic management negligence and corporate misfeasance". That too will remain secret. But the home office has conceded that some prison officers did subject inmates to violence, purportedly as a disciplinary measure – at the very least a breach of human rights legislation, which prohibits torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The legislation also imposes a duty on the government to institute a thorough investigation into any breach. So far it has singularly failed.



Living History (Hodder Headline, £20), Hillary Clinton's memoirs, never failed to inspire me. The former First Lady has championed so much that I believe in – decent health care, women's rights, the needs of children and families – with breathtaking zeal and drive.

TESSA JOWELL
The Mail on Sunday

Submitted by J. James

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

In The Courts

WHO SAYS the law is an ass? Surely not Mr James Stansbury who felt he had not got a fair hearing when he lost his case after an employment tribunal hearing in July 2001.

He said one of the panel of three judges spent much of the time asleep and, during a morning break, emerged from a cloakroom smelling strongly of alcohol. The judge was, according to Mr Stansbury's barrister, plainly drunk and making insulting comments about the chairman of the three judges.

At one stage of the hearing, the chairman had to raise his voice "in order to bring the judge back into consciousness, who then uttered what one might describe properly as a snort, on waking up".

Mr Stansbury duly appealed and one might have thought he might have had an easy time of it. But in May 2003, after a succession of preliminary hearings before senior judges, at goodness knows what expense, the employment appeal tribunal, presided over by high court judge Sir Nicholas Wall, ruled that the result was perfectly fair and that Mr Stansbury's human right to a fair trial had not been infringed. So off to the court of appeal Mr Stansbury had to go, at yet more expense, and finally this week it agreed with him and said his case must be reheard.

The court of appeal has recently, and most modestly, made clear that judges of its quality were a scarce and valuable resource, whose time must be used effectively. So no doubt they wondered privately why the case had to go so far. Perhaps they will make their views known to Sir Nicholas when he joins the court of appeal in January, his promotion having been announced last week.

JARNDYCE VS JARNDYCE

FOR 15 long years Barrie Chapman has been trying to prove that there was wrongdoing in the way his company, the Manchester-based JS Bass Group, was liquidated at high speed by Barclays.

Last month Peter Handcock, chief executive of the court service, asked Mr Chapman's MP, Austin Mitchell, to place a detailed list of suspicions and many files of evidence before the parliamentary commissioner for administration (PCA) for an independent review of the courts' handling of the affair.

The family firm, which had banked with Barclays for 80 years, was put into liquidation in 1988 by the bank following a "quick and dirty" 48-hour survey of the company's assets by Ernst & Young, as first reported in the *Eye* back in 1993. As long-time *Eye* readers may remember, a separate survey commissioned from Professor Tony Christer of Salford University found Ernst & Young had overestimated the company losses by a factor of five.

Mr Mitchell has been supporting the group's former managing director Barrie Chapman in his ongoing attempts to prove that there was wrongdoing, a battle to rival Dickens' Jarndyce v. Jarndyce.

In September Mitchell wrote to Handcock decrying the court service's internal audit of its own involvement in the affair, completed this March, as a "lacklustre investigation". He pointed up the "gross lack of consistency" in the legal paperwork surrounding the administration orders and asked: "Is court service really not suspicious?"

Things for the courts to be suspicious about include the fact that for years Mr Chapman and his fellow directors have tried to get copies of the administration order, only to be told: "there is no record of proceedings", "there is no court evidence" and that there were "no court files on this matter". The auditor suggested that files were lost during several court reorganisations and have since "resurfaced".

Mr Mitchell points out that in the 12 years of trying to get hold of the papers "at no time was re-organisation ever proposed as a possible explanation".

He concluded: "All is not well with this case which has such a strong case that it demands proper and adequate attention… It needs to be of a far higher quality than the dismissive attempt of the auditor."

Mr Handcock's response notes: "I believe it would [be] sensible if the matter be referred to an independent body for a review of the files as you suggest." As only an MP can request a PCA inquiry, he asks Mitchell to do the honours.

Perhaps the PCA can finally shed more light on the matter.

THE WORLD OF FOOTBALL

POOR Paul Stretford has recently been replaced as chief executive of the Cheshire football agency Proactive Sports (*Eyes passim*). The company claims it is "playing to his strengths"; but the truth is that he was so high up there was only one way to go – downwards.

His replacement as CEO is Neil Rodford, former business associate of Kevin Keegan, whom he met at Fulham FC. Rodford used to be a keen supporter of Mohamed Fayed. He was even on the board of Fayed's *Punch*, where he was described as a "media executive".

Another Fulham connection for Proactive is the agency's recent effort to secure a sale deal for the much-fancied Fulham midfielder Sean Davis. Middlesbrough FC chief executive Keith Lamb told the *Money* programme last month that he thought he'd agreed a fee with Fulham, only to get a demand for another £700,000 from Proactive which Middlesbrough refused to pay.

Another attempt was made by Proactive to sell Davis to Everton, which failed as well. It may be that the Everton manager David Moyes is slightly unhappy about Proactive's treatment of the boy wonder Wayne Rooney. The extravagant beach party plus expensive pop stars organised by Proactive for Rooney's 18th birthday is said not to have impressed Moyes, who fears Rooney is being turned into a David Beckham without the charm.

Meanwhile, book your seats at Warrington crown court for the case in which Liverpool boxing promoter John Hyland is charged with demanding money with menaces from Paul Stretford. Hyland's solicitor Peter Quinn has boasted that the trial will give his client "the opportunity to answer the scandalous charges against him and to lift the veil on the dark and murky role of football agents". Whatever can he mean?

Number crunchings

32%

■ percentage of Thameslink trains that arrive late

32%

■ rise in pre-tax profits for Thameslink's parent company this year

Letters

Cross words

Sir,

I know it is the time of year when all good citizens gather round the fire to listen to old stories, but there are some chestnuts that really should be left to die in the flames. To wit, the one about The Daily Telegraph computerising its crossword – it is not going to happen, it never was going to happen.

Long ago, in the misty vales of the mid-1990s I, as crossword editor, thought it might be a good idea to allow our team of crossword compilers the freedom of compiling their brilliant cryptic crossword clues without the constraint of having to fit the solutions into a grid – let the computer do that, I thought. This unassuming little idea was transmuted through the pages of rival papers into the deus ex machina of computers writing the entire crossword, clues and all. (I ask you, computers writing cryptic crossword clues? Not a chance: they have enough trouble beating Garry Kasparov at chess, which is child's play compared to compiling cryptic crosswords.)

The brouhaha aroused meant that Charles Moore, then editor of The Daily Telegraph, rightly decided to reassure our readers that we would never have computer-generated crosswords and, thus, there were no changes at all in the way that we produced our crosswords. And so it has been ever since. Of course, at some time in the next few years I may retire and no doubt a new crossword editor may make changes, just as I did when I was appointed 25 years ago, but computers writing cryptic crosswords? Nah, science-fiction...

Yours sincerely,
VAL GILBERT,

Crossword Editor, Daily Telegraph.

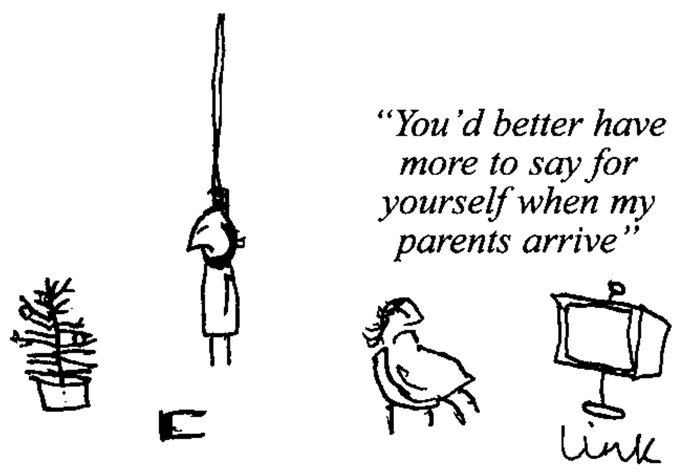
Airfix dogfight

Sir,

I don't think Richard Hearing is correct in his assertions about the Airfix Spitfire. I think you'll find that the "Dogfight Double" of the 1970s was composed of the Supermarine Spitfire Mk IX, and the Messerschmitt BF-109G-6, representing a possible mid-late war battle. While containing an excellent fuselage, the Spitfire had terrible wings, which were two solid mouldings for starboard and port wings, rather than a one-piece wing as suggested. This meant they were made too thin, which the mould-maker must have compromised on to avoid "sink" marks when the plastic was removed from the mould, and also failed to capture one of the distinctive features of the Spitfire, the "gull" wing at the rear wing-roots. Most subsequent moulds by European and Far East manufacturers have had this feature, which requires a one piece wing. Getting slightly more cynical, if IDS is spending his time constructing scale aircraft models, he's using his time more productively than by novel-writing or leading the Conservative party.

Yours sincerely,
GRAHAM (ANORAK) FIGG,

Hatfield, Herts.



"You'd better have more to say for yourself when my parents arrive"

Moveable feast

Sir,

Listening to the Book of the Week on Radio 4 today – Raw Spirit by Iain Banks – I was shocked to hear the author describe a Land Rover as a "Portakabin on wheels". I do hope a representative of Portakabin will be contacting the BBC forthwith to curtail any future shocking infringements of their trademark.

Yours faithfully,
FRASER DYER,

London N7.

Bullet points

Sir,

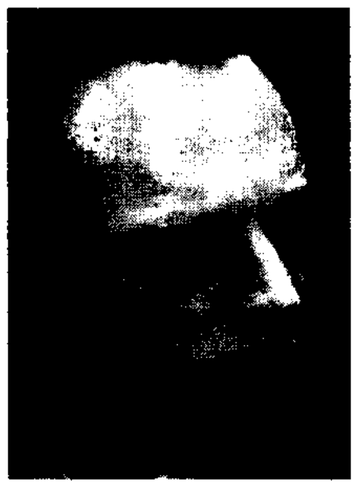
Re: Issue 1095. I feel compelled to bring to light your misunderstanding of modern arms. An RPG is a rocket-propelled grenade launcher, not powered as per issue 1095. Also, I never believe that Mikhail Kalashnikov ever made a sub-machine gun, they were all rifles.

Yours faithfully,
ALEX CRAVEN-GRIFFITHS,

Via email.

Lookalike

Wormtongue



Campbell

Sir,

Recent publicity surrounding the film and book "Lord of the Rings" leads me to remark upon the similarity between King Théoden's wise and loyal advisor Grima Wormtongue and our beloved prime minister's former press secretary Alastair Campbell. The similarity can only be physical, but one has to ask if by any chance they are related?

Yours truly,
TOM BLOOMFIELD,

Carmarthen.

Horse sense

Sir,

Regarding the learned controversy developing in these pages as to the antecedents of Attila the Hun, may I suggest that it is rather unlikely that a speaker of a Ural-Altaic language would have referred to his palaeo-conservative leader as "Little Father" in a Germanic – or Indo-European – tongue, as suggested by Dr Hart? (Eye, 1095) Given the lifestyle of the largely Turkic tribes harrying the borders of civilisation; nomads specialising in mounted warfare and dependent on the horse, it would be much more likely for the name to be derived from "atly" (the second vowel is a conventional rendition of a sound not accessible to western keyboards), meaning "with a horse" or alternatively "inseparable from a horse". The name may be contrasted with that of the Seljuk warrior who conquered Palestine in 1071, Atsyz. This means "without a horse".

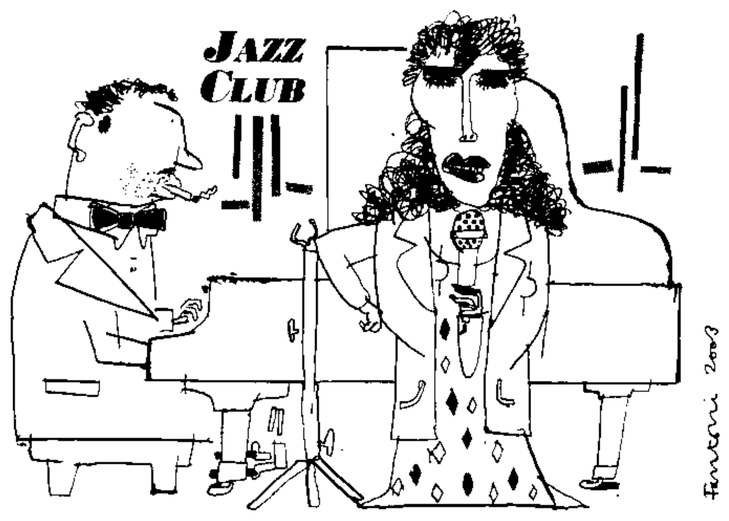
Hoping to stimulate further debate on this important issue.

Yours faithfully,
J.H. BRINDLE,

Via email.

5.10 The Weakest Link; Queen's Speech Response By the Liberal Democrats (T) (9855886). *Independent*

Scenes You Seldom See



"Thank you – and now I'd like to sing Summertime, in the right key, in tune, keeping to the melody and using the words the composer wrote"

Craig Brown-nosing

Sir,

If Fake and Winos Chapman wanted to thank Craig Brown for his send-up of them, they could have written to him. Instead, they want to show the rest of us what sports they are. And I'm sure they're right, they seem like charming boys whose main fault is that they have convinced themselves that the odious drivel they produce has artistic merit. Do they not understand that it was the sincere and profound contempt that most of us have for their work that Brown was so brilliantly expressing?

Yours still dreaming of the Matisse Picasso exhibition at Tate Modern,
SPOTTY WILSON,

Via email.

All New is old hat

Sir,

Remote Controller makes two errors in his review of All New Top of the Pops. While he is correct in stating that "All New" is used in America to distinguish between new episodes and repeats, it is also used to indicate complete reinventions of series, as per The All New Jeopardy or The All New Scooby and Scrappy-Doo Show. To this end it has already been used twice, with tongue in cheek, in the UK for series starring Alexi Sayle and Harry Hill.

Secondly, I should point out that Edd the Duck's name was spelled with two Ds. Well, three technically. However, in his assertion that All New Top of the Pops is rubbish, your reviewer is spot on.

Yours,
M.J. SIMPSON,

Leicester.

Argument demolished

Sir,

Re: Piloti

The best – indeed only – way to stop illegal demolition of buildings (or trees or anything else) would be to insist on total reinstatement. It would remove the incentive to disobey the law in the first place. Fines are unlikely to deter the types you report on, as many of them will simply regard a fine as a demolition fee. Reinstatement would also give work to restorers and maintain skills. Putting the offender in prison until the restoration was completed to the required standard would also add spice to the idea, don't you feel?

To avoid fast-track demolition in order to avoid a possible listing, it ought to be the case that the demolition of buildings requires advance consent and time for proper consideration, just as is the case for new buildings.

ALISON WILSON,

Via email.

Modern movement

Sir,

R.I.P. Greenside. Piloti was somewhat liverish in his condemnation of the demolition of the 1937 house by Connell, Ward & Lucas, and what should happen to the owner. I suspect stringing him up would not be good enough.

Greenside was a landmark of "The Modern House", but like most of its contemporaries, it was minimalist in construction. The architects who designed such pieces of sculpture were more concerned with form rather than performance against the climate. This meant that even in its day, it might have been appropriate to southern Europe, but out of place in England.

Personally I think it a pity that it was demolished, but after all it was only a house. If the nation wants to keep such buildings for posterity it should ensure that anyone who uses them as a house should be compensated for the extraordinary costs. It should also allow bits to be added on if these are necessary for comfort; and were either forgotten about by the original designer or were omitted because of budget over-run. The photo you showed of the house, presumably a recent one, bears little resemblance to the house which was constructed unwisely, amongst tall pine trees, some of which were dangerously close to the building and could have caused serious structural damage. Architectural effect was more important than practicality.

BRIAN LEE,

Hadleigh, Essex.

"Ah, don't be mean... let him have one – it's Christmas"

Eviction notice

Sir,

I read with interest your story about how eviction threats are used to speed up housing benefit claims (Rotten Boroughs, 1094). As a letting agent in Bristol, this has been the standard practice for at least seven years. In fact it is such an institutional procedure that we inform all housing benefit tenants and landlords before the tenancy is signed. The chain of events is as follows.

1. Tenant views property and gets a pre-tenancy agreement.

2. Tenant moves in without rent but maybe with deposit.

3. Every week for two months we ring relevant housing office chasing up rent. We are given various excuses from staff holidays (summer) to staff sickness (winter), and computer crashes to large backlog of cases.

4. Once two months are up we ring back and inform the housing office of our intention to apply to the court for an eviction. Suddenly staff have returned from holiday/sickness the computer is working again and the file rises effortlessly to the top of the pile.

5. Within seven days we receive payment.

I assume this charade is standard practice throughout the country as several people in housing benefit have told me that they are instructed not to pay until the threat of eviction has been received.

Yours faithfully,

LETTING AGENT,

Bristol.

Premier crew?

Sir,

*Your Christmas special "Premiersh*ts" comic strip has plunged your organ to new lows. How you justify using the term "Paki" in any context is beyond me, but to use it in the context of the possible takeover of Leeds United by an Arab consortium is amazing, even more so when you consider the proud Jewish connections in Elland Road's history. Even ignoring the offensiveness of the term used, it is clear that your implication is that the club is racist. How you justify that I know not, if you intend to fall back on the "Mill Hill" incident you will be pouring fuel on the fire. You know that at no time was any evidence offered to show a racist motivation in that assault, and that the judge in the case made that clear to the jury. You also know both the players charged are with another club, not Leeds United. Leeds United have been leading campaigners against racism in football and the fans of Leeds United can be proud of their contribution to removing the scourge of intolerance from the game. An apology is required from the editor, the cartoonist and from the publishers. Failure to understand the offence caused will, I am sure, result in a notable drop in sales in the West Yorkshire region.*

LEEDS SUPPORTER.

● ***Cartoonist Paul Wood replies**: A couple of years ago as a neutral (and on the back of a free ticket), I went to see Leicester v. Leeds. The low point of the game was when the Leeds fans started chanting "You all live in a town full of Pakis", or something very similar. I remember looking over and seeing a small Asian boy, head bowed, wearing a Leeds shirt.*

My friends told me that when Leeds visited Leicester in March 2002 it was the same chant again.

Yes, it was a vile strip; but hopefully it hammered home the ignorance of some of the players and supporters in today's game. In fact it was ignorant on two levels: a) someone thinking an Arabian sheik was from Pakistan and b) someone thinking it's ok to use the term "Paki".

Leeds were singled out because of those racist chants and its recent history of ignorance amongst its players. (Didn't Lee Bowyer tell staff at a McDonald's: "I don't want to be served by a Paki. Get me a white person to serve me or I'll beat you all up"?)

Surely writing letters to Leeds Utd with a view of ridding themselves of certain "fans" would be a better use of one's time than writing to Private Eye.

I'm sorry the letter writer was offended, but think about it – without those idiotic chants the strip wouldn't have been drawn in the first place.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Her death marked a breakthrough which has yet to change the world in ways that we don't know."

PALAB GHOSH, Radio 4
(David Farmborough)

"As yet there has been no reaction from the man who was murdered."

BBC News 24
(Phillip Reeves)

"People should be reminded that America's reason for going to war was weapons of mass destruction. So far, all they've found is a tiny bit of botox."

Stop The War Coalition spokesman, Talk Radio
(Colin McNicoll)

"The Irish lock forward Malcolm O'Kelly playing his socks off his back..."

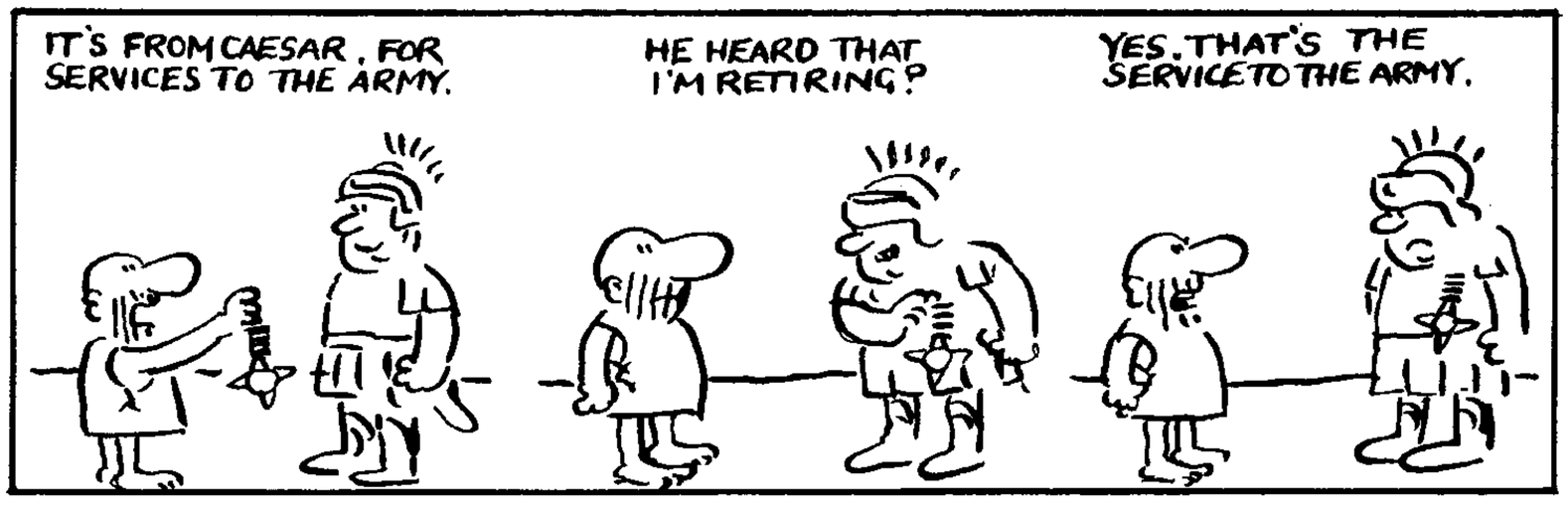
JIM NEILLY, Radio 5 Live
(Ian Ramage)

"I can't imagine we'd have had 60,000 at Old Trafford to watch Leichtenstein if the game had been played at Wembley."

Radio 5 Live
(Dick Lee)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN



Letter from **Panama**
from Our Own Correspondent

HAPPY Birthday to us. Panama is 100 years old; and the centrepiece of our celebrations last month, courtesy of our female president, was a $10m Miss Universe beauty pageant.

The symbolism was as appropriate as it was unintended. Panama, like Miss Universe, is also a bit silly, invented abroad and all about style and easy money over substance or hard work.

Our independence was actually hatched by a Frenchman, Phillipe Bunau-Varilla, an engineer on the failed French attempt to build a canal between north and south America in the 1880s. The US bought the French concession in 1903 but Colombia, which owned Panama, refused to accept the deal.

Miraculously that same year a few devout Panamanian patriots seized power with the help of an American gunboat. A Chinaman, martyred for his country by Colombian shelling, was the only casualty. Bunau-Varilla, who drew up our flag in his New York hotel room, was charged with signing a canal treaty that gave the US a 10-mile wide strip across the middle of the country and a licence to intervene in Panama, which it did for the next 90 years. Surely our finest hour.

Over the three national independence holidays (independence from Spain, independence from Colombia and the, er, first cry of independence – we don't need much of an excuse to party) that marked the celebrations, there were the usual drum-beating parades and banner-waving. The salute was taken from the presidential balcony by Her Excellency Mireya Moscoso and, less obviously, by her chum Sean Connery.

Sir Sean, who is said to have met Moscoso on Barbados, is well known for his love of tax havens such as ours. Proud though our taxi drivers must have been to have had two Bonds in the back of the cab (Pierce Brosnan filmed the *Tailor of Panama* here in 2000), it's still not clear why the ageing Scottish heartthrob presided over our national festivities.

Nor was that the only trouble. We are not natural diplomats and there was the usual kerfuffle among the attending VIPs to turn the champagne flat. We invited Colin Powell, the US secretary of state; and he bumped into Taiwan's president, Chen Shui-Bian, which outraged our Communist Chinese friends. Chen also likes to put money into Panama, investing in spurious government projects in return for the odd favourable vote at the UN.

That was as nothing compared to the party-poopers from the union movement who hijacked Miss Universe. As Miss Dominican Republic was being crowned, the great unwashed topped a week of rioting over low wages and plans to privatise social security with their own parade in paper crowns and hand-written sashes. The finalists were: Miss Poverty, Miss Unemployment, Miss Corruption, Miss Privatisation, Miss External Debt, Miss Impunity. The winner? Miss Misery.

President Moscoso herself will soon be Miss Unemployed. Her term ends next year and her future is uncertain. Her anointed successor, feckless foreign minister Juan Miguel Aleman, has 8 percent in the polls. Martin Torrijos, stepson of General Omar Torrijos, who got the canal back, has 44 percent. The surprise package is Guillermo Endara, who left Mireya's Arnulfistas some time ago accusing her of behaving like "a pantomime queen".

It's a surprise because, while Endara won his spurs fighting against the military regime of General Manuel Noriega, he also lost his marbles. He now lives in a house infested by parrots and sends his state bodyguards to look for food for them. And him. He sends them to Wendy's for hamburgers (after they have first been to check the prices so he can give them the exact money).

Little wonder that a recent poll showed that only 51 percent of us believed democracy is the best form of government, down from 75 percent in 1996, six years after Noriega's downfall. It may not be the best, but it sure is the most entertaining.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

● "Although Mr De Groodt clearly adored his parrots and ferrets," a spokesman for the Netherlands emergency services told reporters in Tegelen, North Limburg, "it seems that he did not care for them very well. He neglected their grooming, and allowed their excrement to accumulate in his house over several years, without ever clearing it away. Until finally, the festering piles of ordure caused the air in the house to become toxic, and he died from inhalation of ammonia gas."

Earlier, a post mortem on the body of Jan De Groodt had confirmed initial suspicions as to the cause of his death. "He telephoned the emergency services early yesterday morning," the spokesman added, "complaining that he felt unwell, and an ambulance was sent to his house. By the time it got there, he was already dead, and the ambulance workers were struck by the penetrating odour when they entered the house, as well as by the screeching of the parrots. Although the police normally seal off a property when there is a suspicious death, on this occasion it was decided to open all the doors and windows, to clear the ammonia vapours. Curiously, none of the parrots or ferrets were overcome by fumes, and were all in excellent health. So much so that several of them immediately escaped through the open windows and have not been seen since." *(De Telegraaf, 19/11/03. Spotter: Kate Armitage)*

– ● –

● *"When the patient came in, complaining of an eye infection, we thought we were conducting another routine surgery," Dr Gurdeep Singh Mann told a press conference at Ipoh Hospital in Malaysia. "We got quite a shock when we found a chopstick and part of a spare rib embedded between his eyes and nose, and were even more astonished when we discovered that they had been there for five years."*

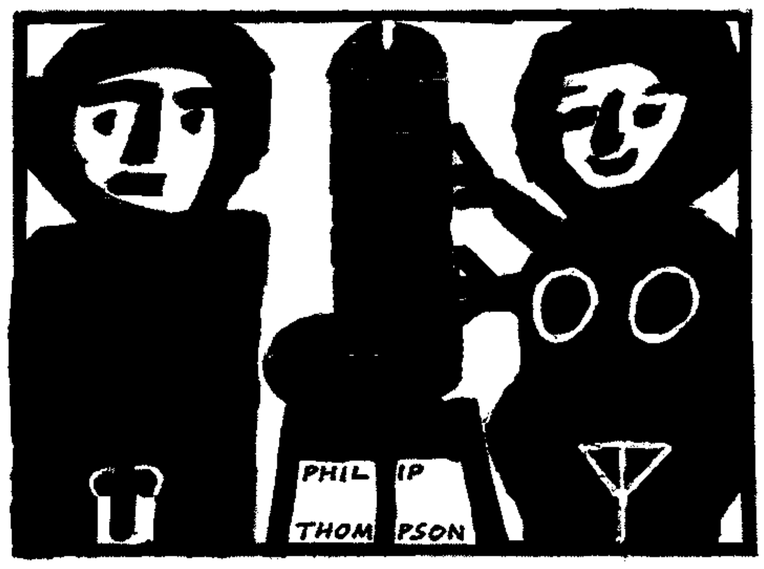
The case of parking attendant Ng Keng Choon has aroused great interest amongst the Malaysian medical fraternity, who believe the case to be unique. "Ng is very lucky to be alive, because one part of the chopstick was touching his brain, and could easily have killed him. He told us that he could not move his right eye, and when we put him through a scanner, we detected a 6cm length of chopstick and the spare rib lodged behind his eyes. After we had operated to remove them, we asked him how they got there, and he recalled being attacked five years ago by a deranged waiter who took exception at his complaints about the spare ribs. The waiter attacked him with a chopstick, but he had no idea that part of it had remained inside his head.

"We have checked the medical journals, and think that this is the first recorded case of a chopstick and a spare rib being found inside a patient's face. So this is a proud day for the Malaysian medical profession." (Sarawak Tribune, 18/11/03. Spotter: Darren Ingram)

– ● –

● "You may refer to what you were doing as an act of worship," Presiding Magistrate Jacob Sareng told fourteen members of the Dabsau cult in Madang District Court, "but I call it an act of disgusting gross indecency. Taking your clothes off and playing with each other's shameful parts has nothing to do with religion, and everything to do with indecent exposure and behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace. I therefore find you all guilty, and fine each of you K50."

Earlier, police station commander Inspector Jimmy Namora had told the court what he had discovered when he began investigating the activities of the Dabsau cult. "There are about two hundred followers, led by a man who calls himself 'Black Jesus'. And although they claim to



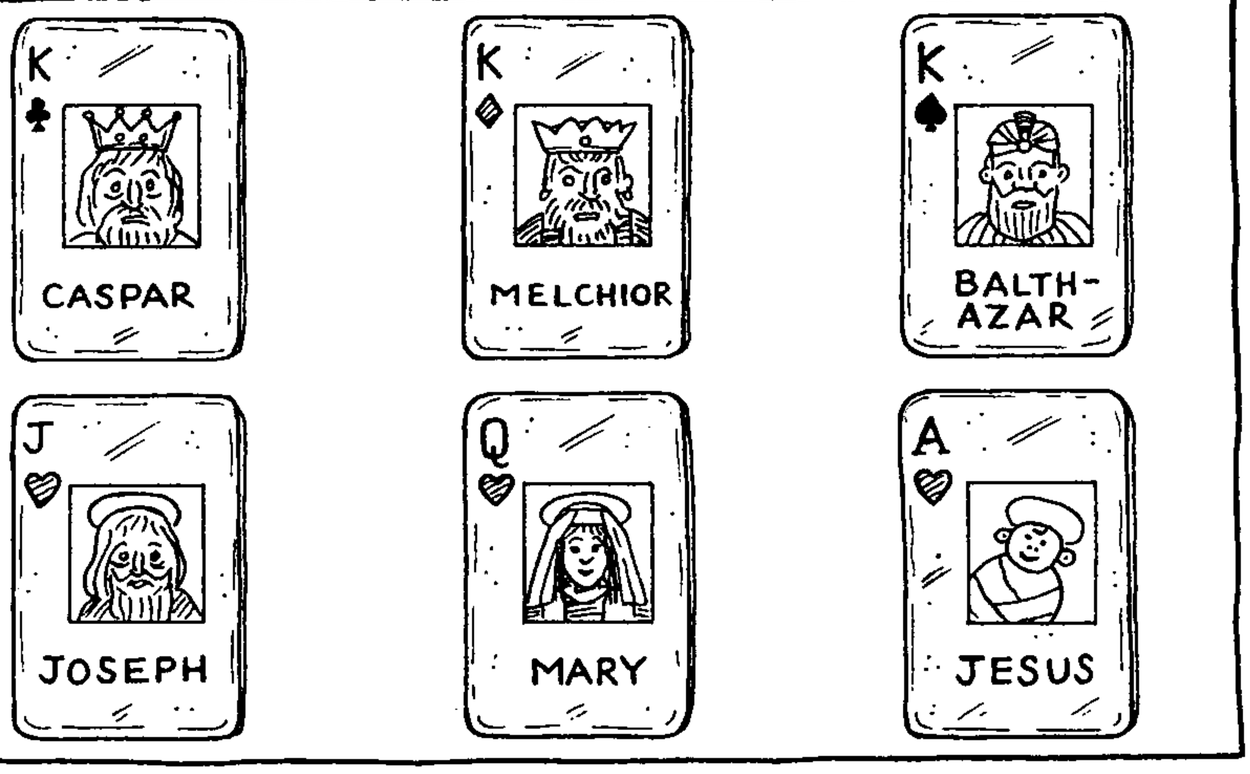
be a cultural and religious group, their activities mostly involve looking at each other's genitals and making sculptures of them. Any man or woman who enters the Dabsau Culture Centre is required to remove all their clothing, else they will not be allowed in. They must then go the altar, where 'Black Jesus' is, and play with his penis until he says that they have passed the test. Then they pair off and play with each other's private parts as they work on sculptures of each other. They are quite open about what they do, and nobody has complained of anything having happened against their will. But surely they must be doing something illegal?"

A spokesman for the Dabsau cult claimed that their religious freedom had been infringed, and said they would appeal against the verdict. *(Post Courier [Papua New Guinea], 11/11/03. Spotter: Eamonn McKeown)*

a apparently

BY MIKE BARFIELD

JUDAEAN ARMY-ISSUE PLAYING CARDS c.1AD



IN THE SCOTTISH COURTS

McFayed v. Regina Day 94

Before Mr Justice Cocklecarrot

(The judge asked the McFayed of McFayed to state his case.)

McFayed: I am the McFayed of McFayed, Chief of the Ancient Clan of the McFayeds, known as the Fighting Fuggers of That Fuggin' Ilk.

Judge: Even in that kilt you do look a bit foreign to me. You have the look of a postcard salesman in Port Said. No offence.

McFugger: That is a fuggin' slur on the glorious name of the McFayeds and this orange and purple tartan bestowed on my clan after our glorious victory in the famous Battle of Harrods in 1983, when I slew the infamous 'Tiny' Rowland, known as 'Faintheart', with my bare hands.

Judge: Be that as it may, Mr McFayed, it says here in Bundle 94, and I quote, "the fuggin' Duke of Edinburgh killed Lady fuggin' Diana and should be fuggin' strung up, och aye the fuggin' noo".

McFayed: I am just claiming my basic human rights under Scottish law, as the Laird of Glen Fugg and the Master of Auld Crookie, to see justice done and to see the Duke and his wife swinging from the highest gibbet in the land, just like our Scottish heroes of old, William Wallace, William Connolly, Sean Connery and Robert the Fuggin' Bruce.

Judge: Quite so, Mr McFayed, but have you any evidence to support your case?

McFayed: Indeedy I fuggin' do-dy, Your Honour. The evidence is to be found in this brown tartan envelope which Your Lordship may find conclusive.

Judge: I think I need to retire and count up the evidence.

The case continues...

Tomorrow: **In The Divorce Courts** Justice Popplecarrot: *Legover Magnatum alleged with senior colleague's wife.*

JAGGER AND SON

New From Eurogames!!!

EUROPOLY

The game craze that's sweeping a continent this Winterholidaytide – a game of diplomacy for 45 players or more.

Just pick the country you want to be and join in the fun as you and your fellow-players try and agree what the rules should be.

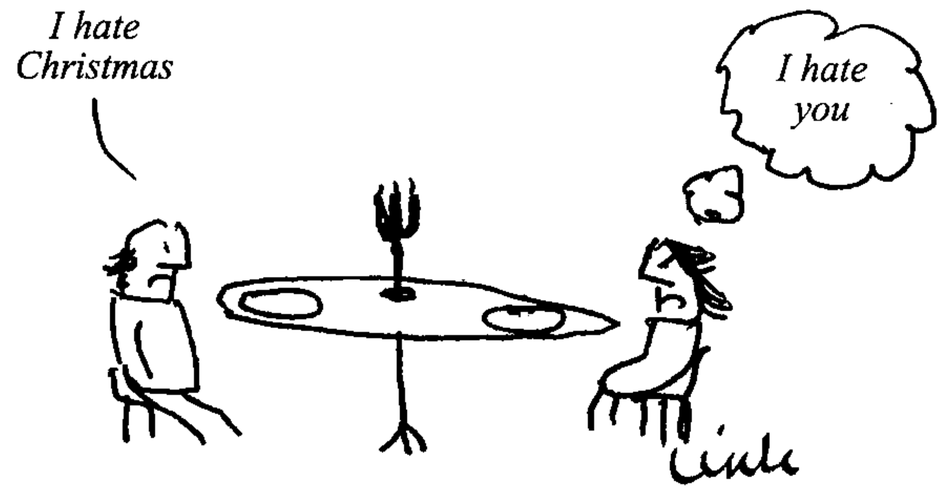
- **10,000-page instruction leaflet comes in all 45 languages (and a few more you've never heard of!).**
- **You'll probably be up all night arguing about such crucial issues as qualified majority, fish quotas, decoupling and harmonisation of the size of tractor mirrors.**

EACH BOX CONTAINS

- ★ **2 million euros**
- ★ European community chest cards
- ★ Veto counters
- ★ 'Go To Jail Berlusconi' cards

Game only ends when all the players get up and kick over the board in frustration. France and Germany then go off to another room and carry on playing a two-man version, while all the other players wish they'd never agreed to play in the first place.

Price: 100 billion euros a year.



ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY

HALLELUJAH!

Ding-dong-merrily-on-high!
In heaven the bells are ringing!

They certainly are today, as we celebrate the greatest Christmas present the human race has ever been given.

Not that we should be merely rejoicing just because the Great Satan has at last been captured, as was foretold by the prophets, such as Brother Rumsfeld and Sister Condy (not to mention myself!).

Obviously this is a very solemn time, when the hopes and fears of all the years are centred on an obscure little town somewhere in the Middle East.

Think about it – isn't it the Christmas story all over again? Except in reverse.

There amid the palm trees is the humble dwelling where, in the darkness, the Prince of Evil is at last to be revealed to the world.

Yet to this lowly place of poverty came visitors from afar, only too eager to see for themselves the devil in human form.

But who were the Wise Men, you ask? Can the children think of anyone?

I'll give you a clue. Two of them have names which begin with "B"!

That's right, young Asif – the Rev. Bush, the Rev. Blair, and the Spanish one whose name we can't remember!

Anyway, they journeyed long and they journeyed far, guided only by the light of the Lone Star of Texas shining in the sky above them!

They didn't waver in their search! They didn't falter in their quest! They didn't listen when the doubters said "You'll never find him"!

This isn't a day to crow over those sadly misguided doubters, because people like Mr Cook, Mrs Short, Mr Kilfoyle, Mr Galloway and Mr Marshall-Andrews will be feeling silly enough today, without me having to name them!

So it would be in the spirit of Christmas not to mention them at all!

And what's the message of this wonderful Christmas story?

It is that when something truly miraculous and profoundly significant happens, everything else in our lives looks trivial and unimportant.

All those things which normally fill our minds and get people so worked up suddenly fall away in the light of the greater truth!

I bring "tidings of great joy"! That's the message! Truly it is the "Good News" we've all been waiting for (and remember it was not the Rev. Dubya who announced it first but your own vicar, right here in St Albion's!).

And, compared with that world-shattering event, who any longer is the slightest bit interested in "weapons of mass destruction" or poor Dr Kelly (who thought he was Walter Mitty!), let alone poor old Mr Hutton, still "burning the midnight oil" to produce his report that no one is going to read!

He might as well pack up and go home and enjoy his Christmas turkey like everyone else!

Never mind, Mr Hutton – I'm sure the whole parish is grateful to you for all the time you have put in, which, sadly, now turns out to have been wasted.

So this year I can wish you all a very happy and joyful Christmas indeed – the happiest I can remember for many years!

Yours in exaltation,

Tony

PARISH PANTO UPDATE

And a huge welcome to our old friend Mr Livingstone from the Aquatic Pet Centre (Newts 'r Us in the High Street) who has very kindly agreed to come back to star in this year's panto as the Lord Mayor of London! despite our differences in the past (Ken could never keep to the script!), we are all delighted that such a popular local figure has agreed to let bygones be bygones (as has the vicar!!!), so that we can all produce the best possible show for the mums and dads and boys and girls!

Here's just a sneak preview of this year's hilarious script, adapted from one of the best-loved of all panto tales.

Act One: On a high road to London

The vicar has asked Dick Livingstone, a poor newt-lover, to rally to the cause.

Vicar: Hey, dick, turn again! I'm always turning, even though I've got no reverse gear!

Ken: You look lovely in your reverse gear! You'll be winning the Turner Prize next!

Vicar: Do you really promise that you've turned over a new leaf, Ken?

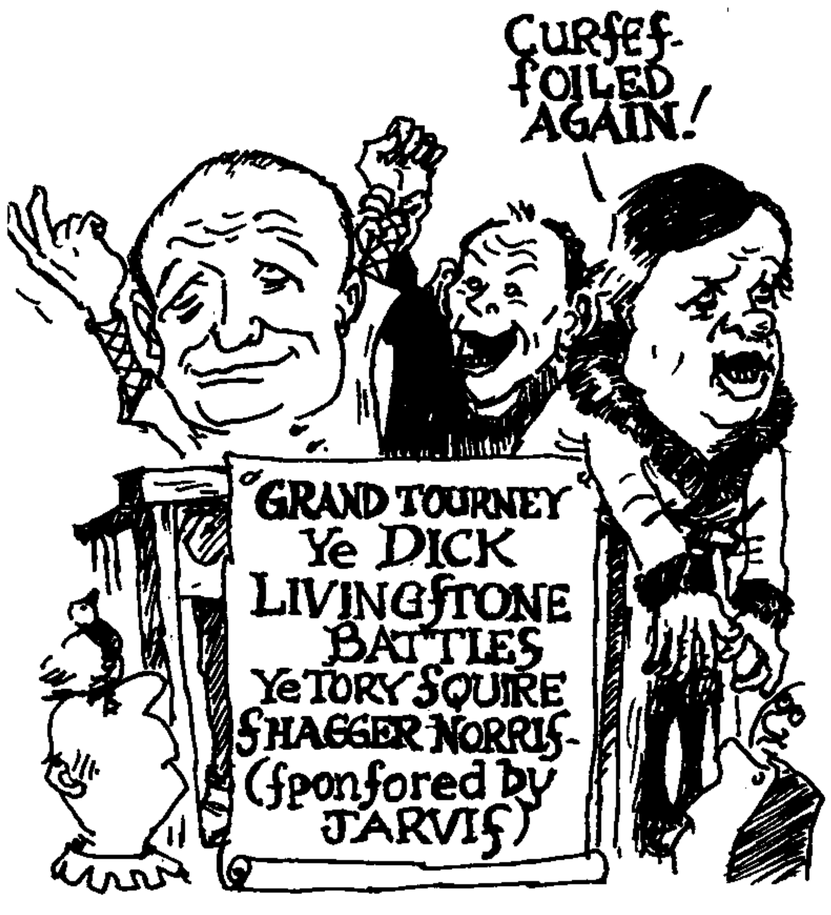
Ken: Oh yes I have!

Audience: Oh no you haven't!

Ken: Oh yes I have!

Audience: Watch out vicar, he's behind you!

Ken: Oh no I'm not!



Act Two: The City Hall

Enter desperate crowd of citizens.

Citizens: Your worship, we are being overrun by a dreadful plague of pigeons!

Mayor Ken: Fear not, I have a cunning plan! All pigeons will be charged £5 to enter the congestion zone. That should sort them out!

Audience: Oh no it won't!

Ken: In that case I'll have to send my cat, Red Kat, to kill them all.

Red Kat: Mao-mao.

Act Three: The Hustings

A sign reads "Grand Tourney – Ye Dick Livingstone Battles Ye Tory Squire, Shagger Norris (sponsored by Jarvis).

Vicar: We don't want to give the game away by letting you know who wins, do we?

Audience: Oh yes we do!

Vicar: Alright then, the winner is me! Thanks for your help, Ken!

DON'T FORGET – BOOK EARLY – BECAUSE THIS PROMISES TO BE THE BEST PANTO EVER!!!!

New at St Albions!!!

There will be some specially-adapted carols at this year's service of Midnight Mass Destruction, including:

"Saddam Lay Y-Bounden" (*Choir only*)

"Little Donkey (Carry Saddam Safely to the Gaol)" (*Children*)

"God Arrest Ye Bearded Gentlemen" (*All*).

Words and music adapted by T. Blair

Yuletiditudal Message From Rev. Dubya of the Church of the Latter-Day Morons

SEASONAL GREETINGS to my brethren in Englandia! And my fraternital regards to your brave pastor Tony Bear and his lovely wife Cherylene for standing by me when the clock struck noon!

WE GOT HIM!!!

That's the message. Dead-Eye Satan has been cornered in his lair, trapped like a skunk in a bunker! And the lily-livered rat wouldn't even go for his gun!! That's the kinda of no-good low-down rattlesnake Satan is! A yellow-bellied coyote if ever there was one!

And what do we do now, sheriff? you ask. Don't you guys watch any westerns? We take him from the gaol and we hang him high! Glory allelulia! Amen! Now I know some of you backsliders in GreatBritainland want to see the county judge ride over and give Dead-Eye Satan a fair trial!

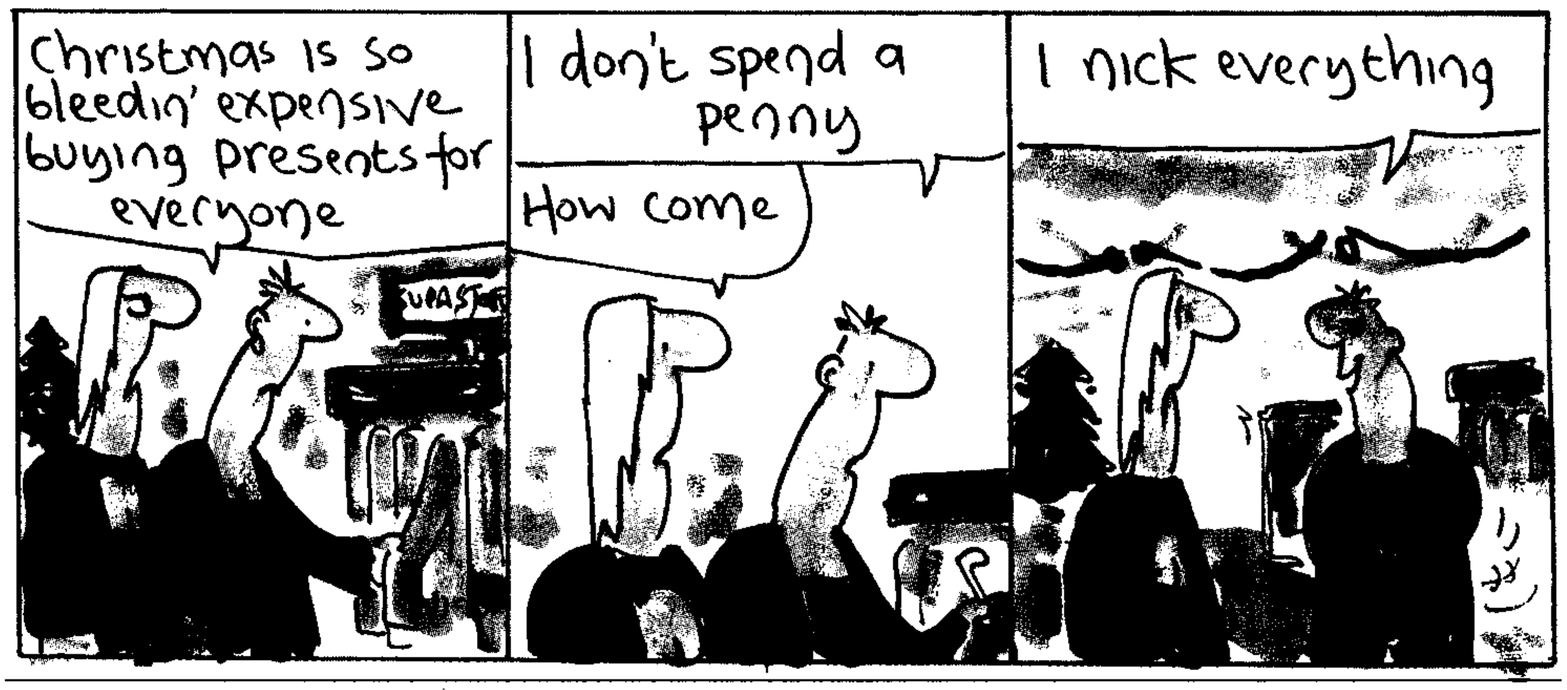
Fine by me! As long as we string him up afterwards!

Then it's back to the sheriff's office for a damn good cup of coffee and one of Laura's googleberry muffins!

Yessirree!

A Happy Xmastide to you all!!

Rev. Dubya, U.S. Marshall


YOBETTES
Christmas is so bleedin' expensive buying presents for everyone
I don't spend a penny
How come
I nick everything

Notes & Queries

QUESTION: What is the origin of the Portakabin?

☐ REVEREND C.J. Barkworth is wrong in insisting that the word comes from the noted Alsace wine *Porto Cabino*, a favourite with English sailors who had visited Geneva, and which they drank in the cramped conditions of their wooden ships. The truth is more mundane, I'm afraid, in that the Portakabin originated in the French court of King Louis XIV ('The Sun King') who, when nature called, would cry out to his attendants "Portez le cabinet". The court dignitaries would then have to watch Louis performing his toilette. Later, to preserve the King's dignity, a small wooden shelter was assembled around the monarch and this gave rise to the abbreviated 'Portakabin' that we know today. Readers may be interested to note that there is a surviving example in *La Musée de la Toilette* in Limoges dating from 1608 (approx). *Professor Terry Duckfield.*

Question: Who was the first person to swim the Atlantic?

☐ INTERESTINGLY, it was a woman, Mrs Bridget O'Cohen, who, on 17th August 1872, set off from the tiny fishing village of Port O'Kabin in Co. Galloway and collapsed on the beach of the Massachusetts resort of Cape Dworkin, an epic 18 years, 216 days and three hours later. On her arrival, the unemployed Irish laundress confessed that she had intended to swim to Liverpool to visit her married sister, who had sadly died in the intervening years. Heartbroken at the news, she immediately turned round and swam back to Ireland, breaking her own record by six years. A memorial to her achievement was erected in the Jewish Cemetery at Antibes in the 1920s, where she had retired to set up a rehabilitation centre for Islamic alcoholics. *Sister Ludmilla O'Cohen (great grand-daughter), The Dunswimmin Priory, Solihull.*

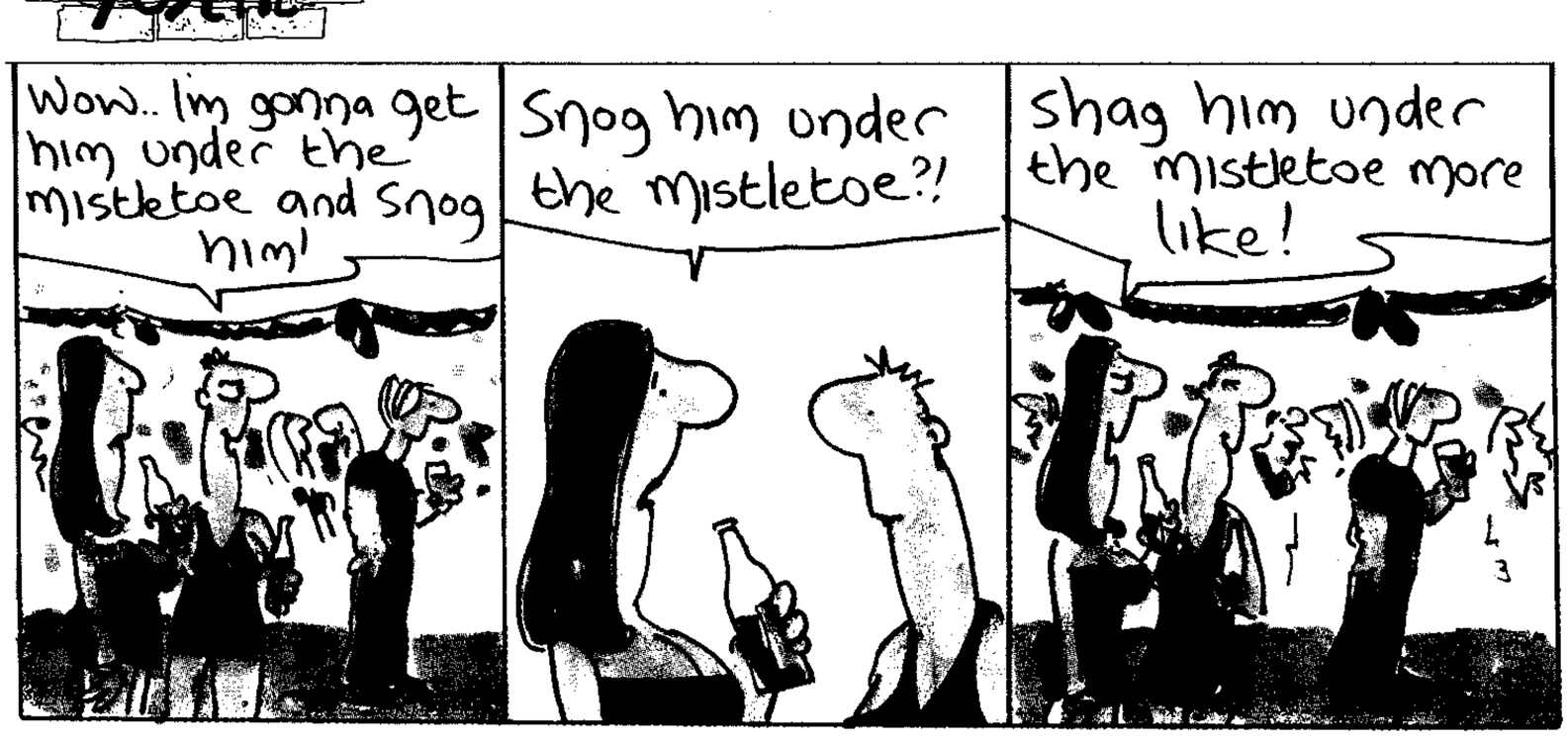
Question: Is it true that under new EU legislation items like the one above have been outlawed, and that any Irish, Jewish or Moslem person who finds it offensive can sue this magazine for £2 billion?

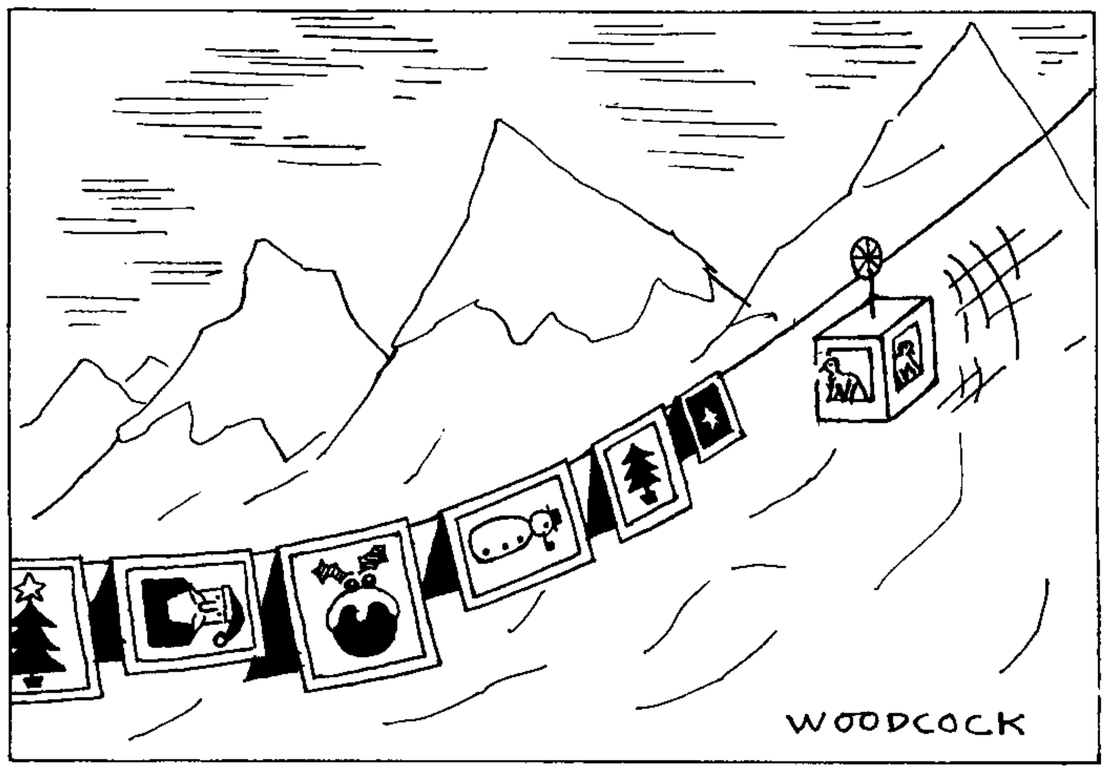
☐ YES.

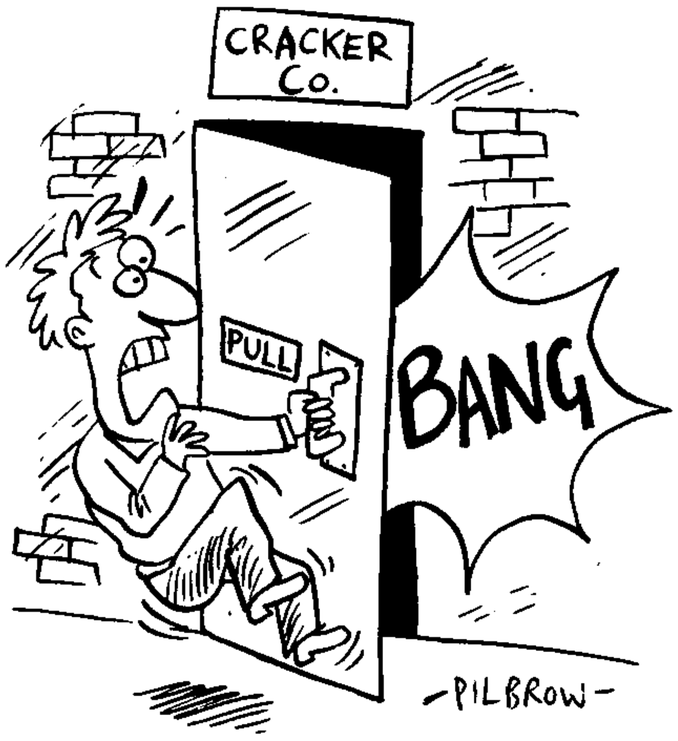
Answers, please, to the following: a) Can owls fly backwards? b) Who invented string? c) Would you like to buy the Spectator?

Answers to Notes & Cheques Gratefully Accepted (Surely 'Notes & Queries'?), C/o Lord Black of Cross-shareholders, Dead Canary Wharf, London E14.

HUSBAND


YOBETTES
Wow.. Im gonna get him under the mistletoe and snog him!
Snog him under the mistletoe?!
Shag him under the mistletoe more like!





"And if it's a girl we'll call her Beyonce"

Exclusive to all newspapers

WHEN WILL THIS MEDIA CIRCUS END?

by **Our Entire Staff**

THIS one-time sleepy Cambridgeshire village has become the unwelcome focus of a relentless media frenzy for over a year. The people of Soham are battered and bewildered and their one wish is to move on and be allowed to get on with their lives.

We spoke to over a hundred typical villagers through the letter-box, asking them "Do you want to move on and be allowed to get on with your lives?".

The answer was unequivocal – "Go away". And that is the message for the media. It is time to go away and then come back again for the first anniversary when we can run a supplement and *(cont. p. 94)*

Holiday Highlights

They Flew to Bruges – *The opera.*

IMAGINATIVE reworking of 1943 classic wartime movie with Bryn Terfel in the David Niven role of squadron leader "Chalky" Rusbridger. Charlotte Church reprises Patricia Wymark's performance as the Belgian nurse. Music by Stephen Sondheim. Lyrics by Don Black. Directed by Ned Sherrin. Includes hit aria: "Nessun Dawnraid"

Eye Rating: ZZZZZZ

The Octagon, Neasden, is proud to present this year's spectacular panto

PUSS IN RUGBY BOOTS

✪ *Starring* **Michelle** from TV's Pop Idol as Cinderella and the victorious **England Rugby Team** as the 15 dwarves (plus 5 substitutes!)

✪ *Featuring* TV's **A.A. Gill** and also TV's **Jeremy Clarkson** as 'Tweedledum and Tweedledumber'!

✪ *Plus* the Currys adverts' **Linda Barker** as 'I'm-a-celebrity-fairy-godmother-get-me-out-of-here' and BBC TV's 'Imagine's' **Alan Yentob** as King Rat-ings!

✪ *Costume* by **Stella 'Paul McCartney's daughter' McCartney**

✪ *Sets* by **Sir Gerald Scarfe** KCVG and Bar

Surprise guest appearance by naughty gay Labour MP **Chris Bryant** as 'Fly Buttons'! (or TV's *The Big Read*'s talking worm, subject to availability).

This star-studded spectacular comes from the people who brought you last year's hugely successful Neasden production of 'Asian Babes in The Wood', kindly sponsored by the Desmond Dirty Group PLC.

"You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll want your money back"

SADDAM

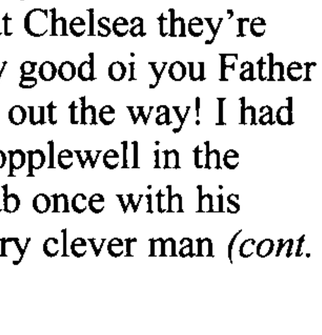
Two of the *Eye*'s leading contributors give opposing views

THE ALTERNATIVE VOICE

Dave Spart, Co-chair of the Free-The-Saddam-One Socialist Islamist Rainbow Alliance (Tufnell Park)

Er... to my mind, the real war criminal is George Bush who should be tried for the brutal genocide of millions of innocent Iraqis rather than... er... Saddam whose only crime was to resist the imperialist fascist invasion of the er... globalised, er... aggression... of Bush and his poodle Blair er... let us not forget it was the American military industrial complex headed by Rumsfeld who supplied Saddam with the arms in the first place and, er... the whole sickening ***(cont. p. 94)***

A Taxi Driver Writes



Simon Heffer
Cab No. 176382

Blimey guv! Don't start telling me that Saddam deserves a fair trial because that's bollocks that's what that is! What he deserves is a length of rope round his neck! It's the only language he understands. I mean how did a bloke like that get a job in a school in the first place, it defies logic and let's face it all that money that Abramovich has chucked at Chelsea they're still no bloody good oi you Father Christmas get out the way! I had that Justice Popplewell in the back of the cab once with his lady friend very clever man *(cont. p. 94)*

THE SUNDAY TIMES

THIS newspaper's devastating revelation that the government was cynically using celebrities to add interest to the Honours List has provoked outrage throughout the world. The idea of blatantly attempting to cash in on the popularity and achievement of famous individuals merely to make oneself look better is surely anathema to any decent human being. We at this newspaper are appalled.

On other pages
Gwyneth Paltrow – marriage pics **2** Johnny Wilkinson – exclusive interview **3** Hugh Grant – new hairstyle **4,5,6** Special Lord of the Rings supplement **7,8,9,10,11** Anybody who is in films or on the telly or in other newspapers **11-42**

The Sunday Times is the Sunday paper that makes you laugh.

The Interview You Won't Hear

Radio 4: The Today Programme

Humphrys: John Humphrys, surely you're paid enough by the BBC as it is? Why do you have to write that stuff in the Sunday Times?

Humphrys: I think I have as much right as anyone else to express my opinions in the press…

Humphrys: But that's not what I asked. And why should the BBC now compensate you for writing columns when you're meant to be working for them anyway?

Humphrys: I haven't got time to answer these questions...

Humphrys: No, let me finish...

Humphrys: No, let me finish.

Humphrys: I'm not standing for this.

Humphrys: Nor am I.

(Both storm off in a huff, protesting that they have been treated like guests on the Today programme.)

SADDAM 'CAN REJOIN LABOUR SOON'

by Our Local Government Reporter **Jerry Mander**

DESPITE opposition within the cabinet and on the party's National Executive Committee, Tony Blair still insists that Saddam Hussein will be able to rejoin the Labour party within the next three years.

"I understand that Saddam's an evil tyrant responsible for terrible atrocities and that he's the number one hate figure in the world at present," the Prime Minister told a reporter, "but, as he has a proven track record of consistently winning elections, I see no reason why eventually he shouldn't be able to be taken back into the Labour fold."

● Andrew Marr's column about how difficult it is to choose the right Christmas presents for your family and friends, *'Socks or Perfume?'*, will not be appearing because of the BBC ban on controversial articles by its top reporters. Apologies.

POLLY FILLER

Why I Turned Down My MBE

IT wasn't exactly a surprise when the letter arrived offering me the chance to become a Member of the British Empire. After all, given the readership of this column, I am well aware that both the government and the monarchy want Polly "on side".

But what was the honour for? Was it on behalf of all working women juggling family and career, wiping the snotty noses of our infants whilst painting a Warhammer Orc Army and organising a dinner party for twenty, whilst simultaenously penning the best-selling *'Mummy For Old Rope'* (£7.99 and making a welcome reappearance in the Top Ten Books By Women Columnists Charts, *Sunday Times* 12.12.2003)??

Or was I being singled out because I have changed the way women think about themselves and their useless partners? We all have them, even Her Majesty, though I don't suppose Prince Philip spends Christmas slumped in front of *Pro-Celebrity Turkey-Strangling* presented by Clarissa Dickson-Wright and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall on Digital E47!!!

But after much soul-searching and in spite of everyone willing me to accept the honour – I just had to decline. And the reason was very simple. By refusing an MBE I've got in the papers again and it has even given me a subject for a whole column at a particularly desperate time of year! Happy New Year.

© Polly Filler MBE.

EXCLUSIVE TO ALL PAPERS

AN APOLOGY

IN RECENT WEEKS, in common with all other newspapers, we may have given the mistaken impression through articles such as "Bring Them Home Now" and "The Nightmare That Will Never End" that the American occupation of Iraq has been both woefully executed and hideously mismanaged and that the ongoing attacks on American troops and hostility shown by ordinary Iraqis on the streets means that every passing day Iraq moves another step closer to becoming a Vietnam-style millstone for George Bush's presidency.

We now realise, in light of the capture of Saddam Hussein and articles such as "We Got Him" and "The Nightmare Is Now At An End", that nothing could be further from the truth and that his eventual execution will show just how brilliantly handled this campaign has been and that the attacks on Saddam Hussein by members of the Iraqi National Council and the joy shown on the street to news of the tyrants capture means that with every passing day Iraq moves another step closer to becoming the crowning achievement of George Bush's presidency.

We apologise for any confusion caused and any confusion in the future when the next group of American soldiers are killed by a suicide bomber when we once again warn that Iraq is sinking into the quagmire of ***(cont'd. p. 94)***

GNOMEBY'S

OF BAGHDAD (Est. 2003)

(Bomb Crater Street, next to burned-out tank)

Important Sale of Memorabilia

(formerly the property of an Iraqi gentleman)

Lot One

1 taxi (licence no. Tikrit 1), some bullet holes in bodywork and windscreen, but otherwise in good condition.

Lot Two

1 pistol, unused, bearing inscription 'The Lion Of The Euphrates Will Not Die Without Taking A Million Infidels With Him'. Accompanied by sales receipt from the Matrix Churchill Supergun Co, Coventry, counter-signed by the Rt. Hon. Alan Clark MP.

Lot Three

1 cabin trunk, enamelled with initials 'S.H.' and the insignia of the Army and Navy Stores, London SW1, containing $750,000 in mint dollar bills, formerly the property of other deceased persons.

Lot Four

1 torch.

Lot Five

I blanket in need of cleaning.

Lot Six

1 beard (false).

Guide price for all items: 4p

Gnomeby's – "We're On The Sunni Side Of The Street!"

That Interview With Jonny Wilkinson In Full

(exclusive to the BBC and all newspapers)

Interviewer: Jonny, what were your feelings as you watched the video of you kicking the goal that won the World Cup?

Wilkinson: It was a team effort.

Daily Mail
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2003

SADDAM CAPTURED – HOUSE PRICES TO RISE

by Our Political Staff
Joyce Rejoyce

Crowds cheering the news that the property market is buoyant again

THE DISCOVERY of the former President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, in a hole near Tikrit has enormous repercussions for British and American policy in the Middle East, but it is even more significant for those in Middle England.

The beleaguered home owners of Britain have at last got a reason to cheer, as the capture of the ex-dictator means increased confidence in the American economy, which will inevitably filter through to British interest rates, which will *(cont'd p. 94)*

IRAQIS CELEBRATE CAPTURE OF SADDAM

by Our Man In Baghdad **Rageh Omaar Sharif**

THOUSANDS of jubilant Iraqis took to the streets last night to celebrate the final humiliation of their former dictator by blowing themselves up and killing anyone within range. *(Reuters)*

LATE NEWS IRAQ

PRESIDENT BUSH has warned that the capture of Saddam Hussein will not mean an end to violence in the region by fanatics.

"Donnie Rumsfeld tells me we've still got Iran and Syria to invade in 2005," said a jubilant President... *(cont. p. 94)*

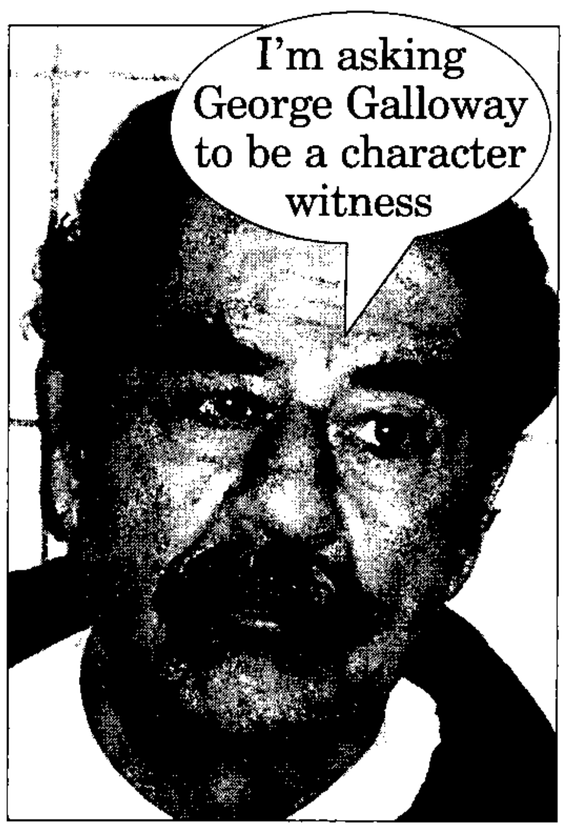
SADDAM HUSSEIN has sent a defiant message to his supporters from his prison cell, urging them to "cower and hide from the American infidels to the bitter end".

"Allah expects each and every one of you to gloriously hide in a hole in the ground, petrified for your life in the face of the invaders," said the former Iraqi... *(cont. p. 94)*

PRESIDENT BUSH has mocked Saddam Hussein after his final hiding place was revealed, saying "When the going got tough, you went and hid in a hole.

"This contrasts so starkly with my decision during 9/11 to secrete myself away in a proper underground bunker until all threat of danger had passed," said a jubilant... *(cont. p. 94)*

SADDAM'S TRIAL



THAT SADDAM CAPTURE COVERAGE ON BBC NEWS 24 IN FULL

(9.32 am: Graphic filling half the screen flashes up – 'Breaking News – Saddam Captured')

9.34 am

Newsreader: ... breaking news just in, we're getting reports that Saddam Hussein has been captured in Tikrit. To discuss this, I'm joined now by the only defence analyst who was awake at this time on a Sunday morning. Rupert Hanwell, what would this arrest mean?

Hanwell: This would almost certainly mean that Saddam has been captured, unless he hasn't been, in which case this would mean that he hasn't.

Newsreader: Would you say it's significant that our breaking news banner that fills the bottom half of the screen is now twice as big and bright as Sky News?

Hanwell: Almost certainly.

10.02 am

Newsreader: We can cross now live to Baghdad to a reporter wearing a flak jacket with a microphone in their hand. John, what can you tell us?

Correspondent: We are getting reports here that Saddam Hussein has been captured.

Newsreader: And where are those reports coming from?

Correspondent: From people watching BBC News 24 from London via satellite.

10.48 am

Newsreader: We can cross now live to an empty room in Downing Street where we'll point the camera at a door for twenty minutes and speculate as to who might be standing beside it.

11.25 am

Newsreader: What effect will Saddam's capture have on the world of fashion? We're joined now by leading British designer Stella McCartney...

(Cont. for 94 hours)

The Sunday Telegraph
DECEMBER 21 2003

Is This Lord Lucan?

BY DOMINIC LAWSON

TODAY the Sunday Telegraph can exclusively reveal that the bearded man arrested in Iraq last night is none other than the missing peer Lord Lucan.

Shergar

The man, going under the assumed name of Saddam Hussein, has been in hiding for over 25 years after the murder of his nanny, living quietly as the President of Iraq.

Now, thanks to an investigation by top Sunday Telegraph reporters, the world can know the truth. 'Jungly Saddam' is none other than Lucky Lucan. His winning streak has finally *(cont. p. 94)*

ON OTHER PAGES • **Will Saddam bid for ailing Telegraph? 7**
• **Where is other missing peer, Lord Black? 10**

THAT EU CONSTITUTION

"No, she can't talk yet – but she can *do her own makeup"*

Results Of BBC's 'Big Watch' Surprise No One

by Our Literary Staff **T.V. Tie-In**

THE BBC's historic nationwide competition to find the most popular film or video of a book which no one has read last night came to its climax, when 21 books which have been turned into a film or TV serial in the last 12 months fought it out for the title of the nation's favourite video.

The winner, to universal amazement, was the hitherto-unknown *Best Of The Teletubbies (surely 'Lord of the Rings'? Ed).*

That 'Big Watch' List In Full

1. **Inspector Morse** (The Box Set)
2. **Best Of Poirot** (now also on DVD)
3. **Of Mice And Men Behaving Badly**
4. **To Kill A Mockingbirds Of A Feather**
5. **East Of Enders** by John Steinbeck
6. **The Complete Big Brother** by George Orwell
7. **Tender Is The Newsnight**
8. **Gone With The Wind In The Willows**
9. **How Clean Is Your Bleak House?**
10. **Lord Of The Lies** by Jeffrey Archer

(That's enough top books. Ed.)

THE TIMES DECEMBER 26 2003

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Who he? Ed.)

Popular First Names

From Henry Porter-Kabin

Sir, As is customary at this time of year, I have compiled from your birth announcements a list of the most popular names of 2003. They are as follows:

	BOYS	GIRLS
1	Jonny	Kylie
2	Wilkinson	Madonna
3	Martin Johnson	J.K.
4	Frodo	Barbara Amiel
5	Gandalf	Catherine Zeta
6	Arnie	Kirsty
7	Ozzy	Rebekah
8	Prince William	Chardonnay
9	Hoogstraten	Nigella
10	Justice Popplewell	Yasmin-Alibhai

Yours faithfully,
HENRY PORTER-KABIN,
The Old Temporary Dwelling,
The Cotswolds, Glos.

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam
Keiko the Whale

So. Farewell
Then Keiko –
Star of the film
Free Willy
And also
Free Willy 2.

Now, my friend
Keith says
You are
Really free
At last.

Which is
Quite poetic when
You think that
He is not a real
Poet.
Just a student
Reading media
Studies at the
University of
Wales.

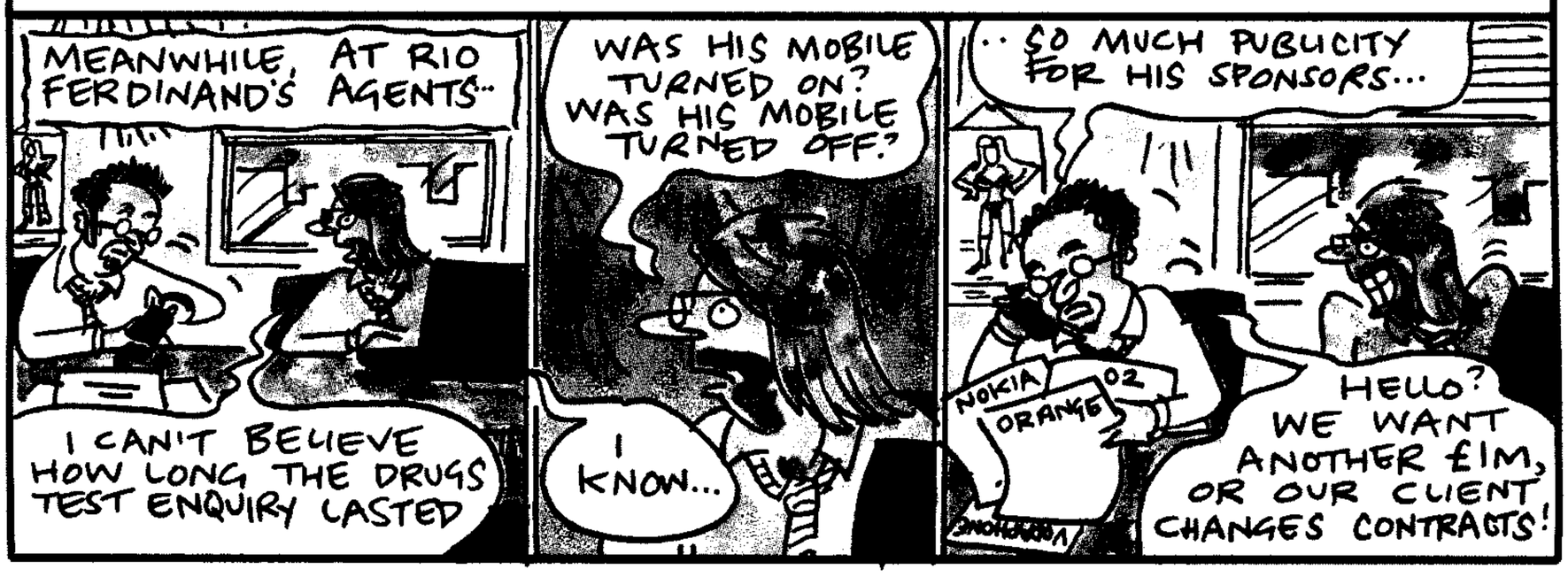
A curious
Coincidence.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

With every purchase of 12 First Class Christmas stamps you'll receive a Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? gamecard. Scratch off the correct answer only on a winning card and win up to £1million. No purchase necessary.

Royal Mail promotion

the PREMIERSH*TS


MEANWHILE, AT RIO FERDINAND'S AGENTS..
I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW LONG THE DRUGS TEST ENQUIRY LASTED
WAS HIS MOBILE TURNED ON? WAS HIS MOBILE TURNED OFF?
I KNOW...
..SO MUCH PUBLICITY FOR HIS SPONSORS...
NOKIA
O2
ORANGE
HELLO? WE WANT ANOTHER £1M, OR OUR CLIENT CHANGES CONTRACTS!

DIARY

DAVID STARKEY: THE TRUE STORY OF THE NATIVITY

Christina Rossetti claimed it all happened in the deep mid-winter, and she managed to rake in a small fortune for her efforts, thank you very much.

Snow on snow, eh? Well, pants to her, say I.

There's not the mimsiest peck of evidence that the Nativity occured in mid-winter, deep or otherwise. Well, that's women for you - no sense of time and incapable of holding the smallest fact in their silly little heads! Typical!

So let's aim for a bit of accuracy in our history, shall we, ladies?

FACT: In the fields, the shepherds were tending their sheep. They were rough, tough men, ever so burly, and with filthy-dirty hands. If one had so much as *offered* them a bar of Lifebuoy, they would have run an absolute mile. They were educated at the School of Hard Knocks, followed by a degree course at the University of Life. But they learnt quite enough to take to the fields of a starry night rather than suffer their wives' incessant scolding and nattering over the kitchen stove.

So there these fine figures of shepherds are – out in those blessed fields, perhaps comparing muscles or arm-wrestling, or rubbing one another down with grass-based oils or engaging in the most wicked sort of shepherdy gossip when – hark! – the herald angel sings. "Glory to the new-born king!"

Come again?

Talk about ancient photo-opportunities! So who exactly WAS this buxom herald angel – and what exactly did she intend by her *ghastly* womanly caterwauling?

Those intelligent enough to have understood my internationally-acclaimed scholarly work "NATIVITY: The Roller-Coaster Life of the Herald Angel" (OUP), soon to be made into a four-part television series for which I received a very handsome advance thank you very much, (well into six figures, since you ask) will already know that – and here I quote from leading expert myself – "Like most members of the female species, she was part wench, part nag. With her showy wings and come-hither smile, she was the ultimate power-dresser, destined to make mincemeat of any man – be he king or shepherd – who stood in her way".

Such vim and gusto in one's prose! This is the way to bring history alive. Why do lesser historians (my so-called "rivals" – I ask you!) go out of their way to make everything so deadly dreary? With a few flicks – flick! flick! flick! – of my pen, I bring history to life, making it accessible to that unspeakable specimen, the man on the Clapham Omnibus, to say nothing of his young friend sitting next to him.

Off the poor shepherds dutifully set, simply *livid* to be wrenched from their manly labours by this cheap little hussy smothered in too much lipstick and swamped by a gallon of mascara. Meanwhile, in another corner of the world, three Kings sat a-swooning in their gorgeous finery.

Of course, that fashionable band of "revisionist" historians – blessed with the happy coincidence that they understand the past better than those of us who have engaged in a lifetime's study – may claim that these three kings wore the tedious modern-day uniform of grubby jeans and t-shirt. But what, may one ask, do THEY know? They're paid a pittance, and if you pay chicken-feed you get chickens. Doesn't it positively make you want to vomit?

Compare MY earnings for the past fiscal year with those of my rivals!

In real terms, I pocketed considerably more than A.J.P Taylor, not to mention toffee-nosed Lord Kenny Clark, who was barely paid enough to keep him in monocles. And as for Mr. Simon Bloody Schama in his open-necked terylenes and *hideous* blouson jackets, his most recent audience figures have proved deeply disappointing, confirmation that he simply doesn't have the popular appeal to command the highest rates in future.

So by my calculations – officially confirmed by my team of top Accountants – I am now the biggest grossing historian the world has ever known. Only last week, the Daily Express offered me a cool £2500 for 800 words on Why Jonny Wilkinson Is Just So Utterly Butterly, and I managed to write it in 25 minutes flat, memorably describing him as the Oliver Cromwell of his day (or was it the Charles 1?)

But – smacky bottys, David! – I digress. The scene now switches to the manger, the Baby Jesus looking *most* uncomfortable – after all, who could *possibly* look good in *swaddling* clothes, I ask you?! History does not record what went through that little head of his, but of one thing you can be sure: he was sick to the back teeth with the way those cattle wouldn't stop their lowing, and simply couldn't *wait* for the touch of seasonal glamour provided by a visit from three kings.

His hangdog stepfather Joseph was a two-bit carpenter of little or no interest to anyone. There is only so much fascination to be had from a shelving unit. The child's mother, Mary, for all her airs and graces, was no better than she should have been. Little Miss Perfect I don't think. And it didn't stop her getting in the family way, now, did it?

Between the two of them, they presented a sorry sight. Their feel for home furnishings was *pitiful*, and, with donkeys, sheep and heaven-knows-what scattered all over the place, one quite *blanches* at the absence of hygiene.

For all their tedious do-goodery, this grim couple did nothing to merit a visit from one king, let alone all *three*! Small wonder the regal threesome didn't waste a minute in that sordid stable before depositing their gifts and saying their goodbyes. Wise men indeed. Memo to Mary and Joseph: I myself was twice invited to dine at Kensington Palace with the late HRH Princess Margaret, and only recently I stayed with Darling Debo at Chatsworth.

Touché!

So we leave them there in the stable, all alone now that the kings have scarpered and the shepherds have (finally!) cleared off. What does the future hold for the Infant Jesus? Well, he certainly wasn't backward in coming forward was he? But for all his fame (largely posthumous, I might add), he earned a fraction of what I earn – AND he never made the cover of the TV Times.

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

LIGGER

LOVE THE NEW SINGLE, GARY.
ABC RECORDS
THANKS. I WANT TO RELEASE IT NEXT MONTH.
AND I REALLY LOVE THAT YOU'RE GONNA GIVE ALL PROFITS TO CHARITY.
WELL I WANT TO PROMOTE MY ALTRUISTIC SIDE...
SO HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT A TITLE?
OH YEAH
SINCE MICK BECAME 'SIR' MICK I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT NOTHING ELSE...
WHY DO YOU THINK HE'S DOING IT FOR CHARITY?

Literary Review

Log-rolling News

"A DISAPPOINTING year for log-rolling" pronounced the *Bookseller* diarist Horace Bent, above a somewhat cursory trawl through this year's myriad Books of the Year selection.

Presumably whoever devised this headline was trying to be ironic. Certainly a casual glance at the annual spectacle of the great and good recommending works by the great and good in the national newspapers would seem to suggest that a new-found probity has taken over from the bad old days – and very grim and bad old days they were – of collusion and serial back-scratching in which novelist X praised the work of poet Y in the *Daily Telegraph* one week and found the favour returned in the *Sunday Times* the next.

All that has changed, as any seasoned observer can tell you, is that stealth has replaced some of the flagrant abuses of the past.

One very neat trick, in a world of short memories, is to wait a year. 2002 found Hilary Mantel waxing enthusiastic over Sarah Water's Booker-shortlisted *Fingersmith*. Twelve months later, what does Ms Waters do but return the compliment with an encomium in the *Observer* to Mantel's memoir *Giving Up The Ghost*. Or you can plump for books that just happen to appear in the same catalogue as your own work. Thus John Lanchester in the *Guardian* voted for Don Paterson's *Landing Light*, Tom Paulin's *The Invasion Handbook* and the collected Marianne Moore, all of whom happen to be published by his own sponsors, messrs Faber. Or, like the *Guardian* contributor bowled over by Julian Barnes' *The Pedant in the Kitchen*, you can subtly flatter your editor: Jules' kitchen musings are, of course, a feature of the *Guardian* Saturday Review.

Alternatively, there are the attempts at humorous self-deprecation. And so we found D.J. Taylor, in a *Guardian* piece about literary log-rolling, announcing that he was "trying very hard" not to recommend John Walsh's movie memoir *Are You Talking To Me?* on the grounds that its author was the godfather of his three year-old son. Alain de Botton, on the other hand, merely informed readers of the *Times* that his friend James Delingpole had written a novel called *Thinly Disguised Autobiography* and asked him to mention it. What a jape, eh?

All this, at least, has the mild virtue of subterfuge. Elsewhere, however, all the old wires are cheerfully being pulled without the least sense of shame or concealment. Thus Julie Myerson enthused over her great friend Esther Freud's *The Sea House* in the *Daily Telegraph* without mentioning that Freud is actually the dedicatee of her own most recent work. Even this, though, stopped some way short of Nicola Shulman who in the *Evening Standard* went for a "glorious" commonplace book, written by her dear old dad, Milton. In the *Observer* Frieda Hughes produced a similarly moving response to, er, the *Collected Poems* of, well, you can guess the rest.

Pride of place in this procession of knowing nods and not-so-discreet glad-handings was taken, inevitably, by the *Spectator*, all of whose contributors delight in puffing works by other regular visitors to Doughty Street. Hugh Massingberd was one of several pundits pressing the claims of A.N. Wilson's *Iris Murdoch As I Knew Her* ("joyfully funny") – others included Rupert Christiansen and Roger Lewis – while drooling over Master Delingpole ("contains the most truthful descriptions of sex from the male point of view that I have ever read"), who just happens to be the *Spec*'s TV critic.

In its sports books of the year, the *Observer*'s review section managed a plug for Tim Adams's *On Being John McEnroe* — but didn't declare that Adams was a review staffer and had once edited the publication.

Meanwhile the *Times* ran a five-star arslikhan puff in its list of required reading about the Iraq conflict. "Some books published since the war have served as a reminder that amid all the violence and hatred, true qualities of leadership and courage emerge. Such books include Peter Stothard's *30 Days: A Month at the Heart of Blair's War*, with its account of life inside Downing Street during the conflict."

Etiquette might have demanded mention of the fact that until last year Stothard had edited the paper, that the newspaper had serialized his book... and that it was published by HarperCollins, a company owned by the *Times* proprietor, R. Murdoch!

Elsewhere, much that was wonderfully abstruse sailed unapologetically into the orbit of the nation's middlebrow book page browsers. In the *Evening Standard*, Jonathan Meades demanded that a British publisher be found for someone called Denis Grozdanovitch's *Petit Traite de Desinvolture*, "a delightful series of essays about hanging out, killing time, farniente... his preoccupations include a highly developed anglophilia, real tennis, cats, afternoon men." Ciaran Carson in the *Guardian*, meanwhile, was hoping to increase sales of Walter Benjamin's *Selected Writings Volume 4, 1938-40*.

Shopping basket case

The Shops

India Knight

(Viking Penguin, £12.99)

FROM years of domestic and confessional columns we already know more than is probably healthy about what it is like to be India Knight: marriage break-ups, kids, "eeooo" upper thighs and "flooby" breasts being about the sum of it. But her new book about "how, why and where to shop" contains one final explanatory addendum. Being India Knight is just flipping great.

Sashaying from shop to shop, our heroine gets paid to pontificate upon the whys and wherefores of that just-so twinset, the latest bamboo knitting needles or the organic face-fudge that can turn a troll into a princess for only the price of a small car. If your life revolves around summary acquisition and the irrepressible allure of the impossibly banal, nothing could be better than being India.

If it doesn't, the message is that it should. India loves shopping and those who don't are plain wrong. "It saddens and amazes me that there are people out there who hate shopping," she begins. It might equally sadden and amaze that there are people who consider shopping so important. But luckily, for the non-believers, alongside a description of all India's most essential boutiques, she includes a potted memoir, so we can see how shopping came to mean so much to her.

Shopping, you see, enabled her to have what she wanted: a revelation she describes as the "almost-not-daring-to-believe, kick-in-the-stomach feeling of pure joy — 'You mean we give you a few coins and the lovely thing becomes mine?'"

At this point, a warning to all readers of *The Shops*: there has been a fatal omission. Like India, you too may choose to spend your idle days gambolling gaily into west London boutiques, swiping up the next delectable must-have. But should you then gambol back out again, trinket in hand, you will doubtless be collared by a store security guard. Because India has forgotten that shopping costs *money*. And to write a book about one without mentioning the other is like not telling a debutant driver about... petrol.

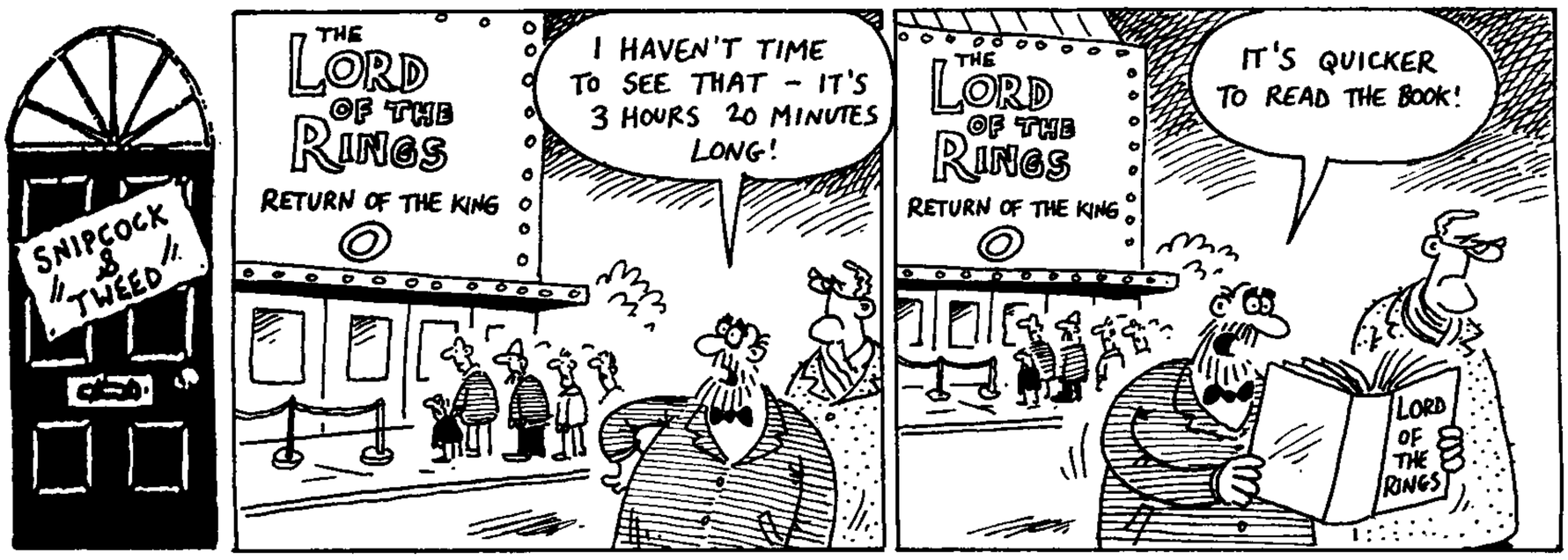
For example, if you were to follow India's advice then by page 10 you would have spent at least £600 on a Delvaux bag. "These are instant classics, so impeccable that other bags somehow start looking pitifully shoddy by comparison." And you would have had to go to Brussels and back to get one. Still, no one wants to look pitifully shoddy: and remember — all you do is give a few coins and the lovely thing becomes yours.

And so a book that is sold as a first step towards a philosophy of consumerism finds itself avoiding the ugly facts of economics like so much dog mess. The "how" and "why" of shopping is that if you have the cash, you can buy the stuff. And, er, that's it.

Come page 131, she deigns to address this minor point, claiming that it is the "non-admirers of shopping" who always have to spoil the Bond Street beanfest by raising "the grotesqueness of spending money". To this she retorts "the idea that shopping necessarily involves monstrous quantities of ready cash is nonsense; as is the idea that shopping is essentially a middle-class pursuit".

Both of these may well be true, but neither is borne out one jot in her book. It is peppered with her recommendations of places to go, many of which are online. Follow her advice and you could spend £140 on a bespoke shirt ("you simply can't go wrong"), £30 on a 15-minute eyebrow treatment, £25 for a 20-minute wig consultation, £120 for a 90-minute detox spa or £300 for a ("lovely") bike. So, not middle class at all then.

Of course there's no need to get all po-faced about this frippery, except that some suckers are re-mortgaging their souls to live the life of casual self-indulgence that India recommends with such ardour. And, if they fork out for *The Shops* as well, they will have £12.99 less to spend on something useful.


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
THE LORD OF THE RINGS
RETURN OF THE KING
I HAVEN'T TIME TO SEE THAT - IT'S 3 HOURS 20 MINUTES LONG!
THE LORD OF THE RINGS
RETURN OF THE KING
IT'S QUICKER TO READ THE BOOK!
LORD OF THE RINGS

Sidcot School
Winscombe, North SOmerset BS25 1PD
Tel 01934 843102 Fax 01934 844181
www.sidcot.org.uk
Teacher of Spainish
Advertisement

Books & Bookmen

■ AS THE Soham murder trial drew to a close, John "Flakey" Blake was, perhaps unsurprisingly, gearing up to rush out a book on the whole terrible business. The author will be one Nathan Yates of the *Daily Mirror*, whom Blake signed up midway through the Old Bailey hearings.

"He was intimately involved right from the beginning, when the girls went missing," Blake told the trade press. "He's got a lot of exclusive material. He's had a real inside track on the whole thing. He phoned me and said, 'I've got all this material. It's far too much for a news story. It should be a book'."

Yates might have been intimately involved at the beginning, but later on he was distracted by other matters of great weight. On 3 November, as the trial began, Yates was busy writing about jazz wunderkind Jamie Cullum's chart success. During the trial, he was responsible for other classics like "HAPPY 100th DAILY MIRROR" ("Prime minister Tony Blair poured praise on the *Daily Mirror* last night as he turned up as guest of honour at our 100th birthday bash...") and "national anthem most hated ringtone", as well as keeping a watching brief on Ozzy Osbourne's well-being and Nicholas van Hoogstraten's decision to join the Samaritans.

Meanwhile Aidan McGurran and Adrian Shaw were busy covering the proceedings on which Yates is now Flakey's expert of choice. In addition, Yates is being trumpeted by Blake as the winner of the 2003 reporter of the year award at the British Press Awards. Actually, that award went to his colleague Steve Dennis. Yates was not even shortlisted.

■ RICHARD and Judy will be "doing an Oprah", after all. As part of their tie-up with the "Best Read" award at next year's Nibbies, daytime TV's finest are setting up the Richard and Judy Reading Club, aiming to do over here what Oprah Winfrey's book club did for book sales and adult literacy in America.

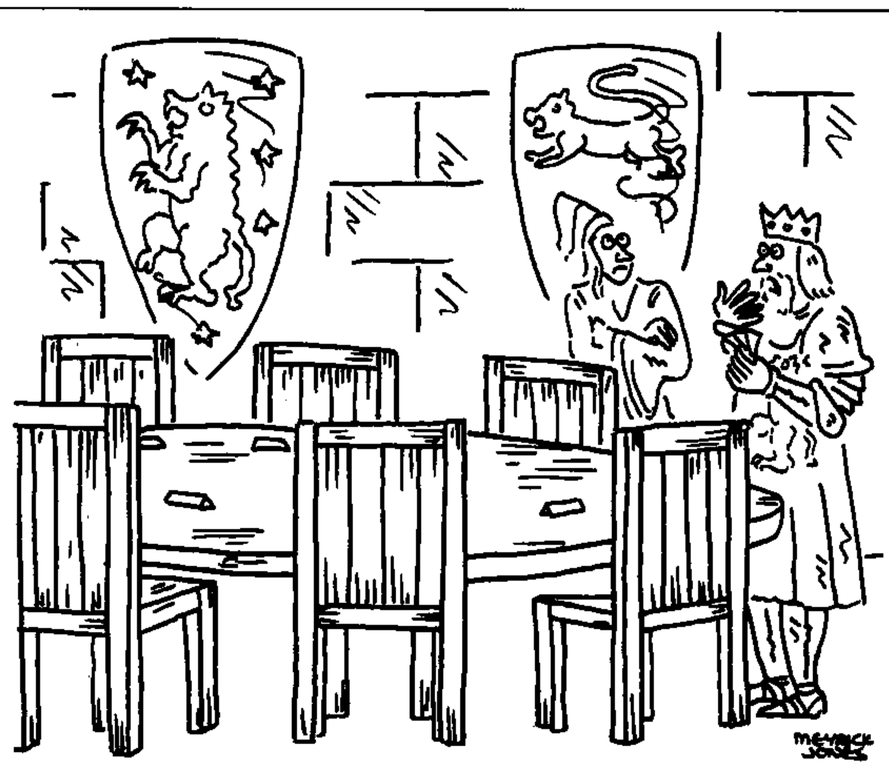
Fair enough. Like any high-profile TV programme, an appearance on *Richard and Judy* can help publishers shift units. Unfortunately, *Publishing News*, never afraid of a bit of purple prose, chose to take it a bit further, suggesting that the "the launch of the Best Read, and the Richard & Judy Reading Club, will further enhance the status of Richard Madeley and Judy Finnigan as influential gurus of the book world". Er, gurus? PN's rabid enthusiasm for the club might have something to do with the fact that it organises the Nibbies and is thus poised to profit handsomely from Madeley and Finnigan's efforts...

■ CONTRIBUTORS to reference books usually steer clear of making bold predictions, as they have a nasty tendency to be proved wrong shortly after publication. Nevertheless, Duncan Cooper probably thought he was on safe ground when he wrote in the new *Rough Guide to Rock* that "for Elliott Smith [a critically-acclaimed American singer/songwriter] the future looks bright and interesting". Unfortunately on 21 October, less than a month before the book hit the shops, Smith committed suicide.

■ REVIEWING *The Pterodactyl's Wing: Welsh World Poetry* in *Poetry Wales*, the magazine's reviews editor Amy Wack placed special emphasis on the talents of two of the anthology's contributors.

Sarah Corbett, she said, produced "sensuous poems" which were "full of brave emotion", while Samantha Wynne-Rhydderch was praised for her ability in constructing "a ferocious narrative". While the anthology was published by Parthian, Corbett and Wynne-Rhydderch's books are normally published by Seren. By an amazing piece of luck, Wack is also the commissioning editor at Seren Books, Wales' main poetry publisher and proprietor of *PW* — which has a reputation for praising other Seren products to the skies.

'Bookworm'



"Oh no, if we put Gawain here next to Mordred, that means he'll be opposite Lancelot who'll be next to Galahad"

IN THE LIBRARY

■ AS PART of preparations for its role as European Capital of Culture 2008, Liverpool plans to spend £35m converting its historic Central Library into what it calls a "World Discovery Centre". Fine... but don't mention the books.

Five floors of the building will be ripped out to create a spacious new entrance, a visitor centre with café, a huge gallery space and a room containing 500 shiny new computers.

Curiously, the three pages of effusive press release about the scheme don't mention the word books once. What a way to celebrate European culture.

Warballs

"Thank Tony. Honor Tony... Click Here to Thank Tony." — From thankyoutony.com, a website enabling "the American people to extend their heartfelt thanks to Prime Minister Tony Blair for his courage and leadership".

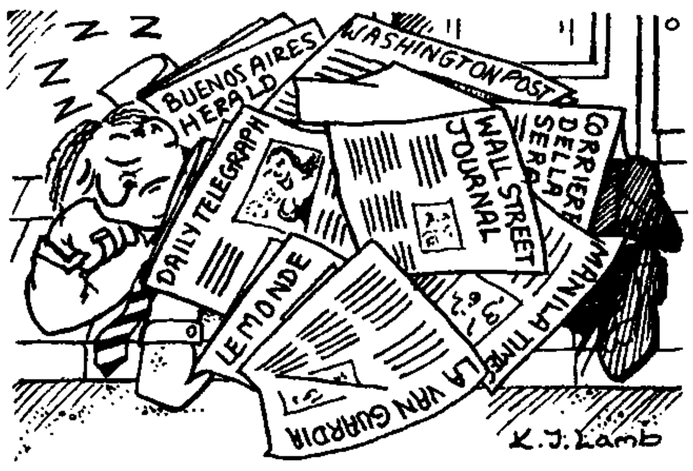
"The world has taken a battering since 11 September 2001. Interest rates are going up. We plan our Christmas windows very far ahead – in March. At the time, we were thinking that as an antidote to the Iraq war, people wanted something soft and cuddly for Christmas. People are embracing wholesome values again." — Selfridge's marketing director James Bidwell, explaining to *Design Week* why his Christmas window display includes a huge chocolate sculpture of Nigella Lawson.

"No Al Qaida in Seahouses. North Sunderland parish council believe there is no threat of a terrorist attack on Seahouses." — News in brief column, *Northumberland Gazette*.

Pseuds Corner

I regularly buy only the Telegraph, getting my other information from Le Monde and the Wall Street Journal (much improved since being reinforced in its European edition by the Washington Post). I often buy the Corriere della Sera and La Vanguardia, of Barcelona, and also like to pick and choose among the other dailies now easily available in London, such as the Manila Times and the Buenos Aires Herald.

PAUL JOHNSON
Spectator



[Michael Jackson] wanted very much to transcend any trace of being a demographic... turning himself into a sociological palimpsest, the legible subtext of which fascinates because of Mr Jackson's oddly heroic denial of what makes him real.

GERALD EARLY
Wall Street Journal Europe

The most recent book he [Ruud Van Nistelrooy] had read was David Winner's Brilliant Orange: The Neurotic Genius of Dutch Football. An erudite and oddly profound work, it's not the kind of book one expects to find a professional footballer grappling with, especially in his second language. 'As a Dutchman reading it,' says Van Nistelrooy, 'it's a kind of mirror. It shows you things about yourself you've never seen before. It makes a comparison with the country, below sea level, and how we've had to create our own space.' Winner contends that the Dutch, owing to the limitations of the land, have learnt to appreciate abstract space and to reshape the possibilities of set dimensions. It's this talent, he argues, that has enabled them to maximise the potential playing area of a football field.

ANDREW ANTHONY
Observer

[It represents] the topography of Carol's mind. I am particularly interested by the ethereal effect of the fragile lines within the solid-but-transparent form, and the spiritual quality of the empty space within which the image seems to float... Carol was desperate to know how large her brains were, and was thrilled when I told her they were enormous.

Artist ANGELA PALMER on her glass carving modelled on Carol Vorderman's brainscan, *Daily Telegraph*

Selling, Selling Out or Resisting Dominant Discourses? Rap and the Uses of Hip-hop Culture
This paper looks at rap and its position at the centre of wider hip-hop culture... The themes of internationalism and trans-nationalism in pop will be touched on to address the entanglement of rap with formal and informal education to keep youth on the "straight and narrow" path away from "the street" with all the associations that this entails. The two main examples of the co-option of rap in public sector youth projects from Strasbourg France and Manchester in the UK will be used to demonstrate how youth creatively fashion context-dependent musical-cultural forms in street-speak vernacular tongues that reflect their local environments; potentially providing a counter-balance to the negative version of globalisation whereby a top-down process of cultural homogenisation forcibly flattens cultural diversity.

Paper by RUPA HUQ, given to Newcastle University's Postcolonial Research Group and Americas Research Group

CONTRIBUTORS: Adam Ure, Michael Grosvenor Myer, Edward Moisson, John Hird, Jack Arthurs.

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

GLO FOR GOLD

NEGOTIATIONS for a new European Union constitution plunged the British government into panic: not for any of the reasons set out by the opposition or the Murdoch press, but because of the greed of multinational companies striving to avoid tax.

A *Financial Times* leading article on 11 November summed up the problem. Rules designed to prevent companies from moving their taxable profits from higher-tax jurisdictions to lower-tax areas are coming under attack at the European court of justice (ECJ).

The article referred to recent ECJ decisions which "threaten to undermine the ability of European countries to tax the corporate sector". Two of these decisions found against the Dutch and German governments' right to restrict tax relief for certain multinational companies' financing costs. The companies claimed they were being "discriminated against". The judges agreed and the result was a net loss to German and Dutch taxpayers of many millions, if not billions, in tax revenue.

In Britain, despite the government's generosity to multinational companies, the same results at the courts could be catastrophic. One such defeat in 2001, a ruling that "advance corporation tax" was illegal for British subsidiaries of European multinationals, has already proved extremely expensive to the government. Under a judicial procedure introduced in 1998 to allow for "class actions" in Britain, there could be many more on the way.

Alone in the British press the *Eye* has named the companies that are preparing, with their lawyers and accountants, for a mass assault on the British taxpayer. In issue 1089 we named some of the companies that are suing the government under "group litigation orders" or GLOs. If these actions are even partially successful, they could deprive the British exchequer of many billions of pounds.

On 8 October yet another GLO was launched. It was announced on the Inland Revenue's website on 6 November. This was called the "Franked Investment GLO"; and it challenges the amount of advance corporation tax companies had to pay before 1999 when ACT was scrapped. This brings to five the number of GLOs threatening the government.

The first – the "ACT group litigation order" – was launched in 2001 and has been signed up to by multinationals looking to cash in on the British government's defeat at the hands of the ECJ. The *Eye* has prised out of City solicitors Dorsey & Whitney the enormous list of companies that have joined this action.

Nearly 500 companies are named. Some of them, like Enron, are irrelevant because of bankruptcy or disgrace; but some of the best known multinationals are on the list. (The list includes companies like BSkyB, whose main shareholder, Rupert Murdoch, is strongly opposed to the EU, but not at all opposed to using its institutions to dodge corporation tax.) Many of these companies could not wait to join the new GLO in October.

Meanwhile, the *Eye* will continue to study and publish the list of companies clamouring to sign up to this vast Dodgers' Charter. One entertaining feature about them is the number of top people in their boardrooms who play such a heroic part helping the government they are doing their best to shaft. Here is a list of some of the latest companies to join the GLOs, and some of the many ways in which their directors have flocked to help "new" Labour.

CFC and EU Dividend GLO

AngloAmerican

David Challen CBE, member of the Takeover Panel and the Financial Reporting Council.

Rob Margetts CBE, chairman of the UK Natural Environment Research Council.

Sainsbury's

Chief executive *Sir Peter Davis*, chairman of government's Employer Task Force on Pensions and chairman of Business in the Community.

Invensys

Chief executive *Rick Haythornthwaite*, trustee of the National Museum of Science and Industry.

Prudential

Chairman *David Clementi*, member of board of Financial Reporting Council, recently asked by constitutional affairs minister David Lammy to conduct review of regulation of legal profession.

Scottish and Newcastle

Ian McAllister, deputy chairman Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, member advisory committee on Business and the Environment.

United Business Media

Chairman *Lord Hollick*, special adviser to DTI and long-time business adviser to "new" Labour.

Adair Turner, chairman of government commissions on pensions and low pay.

Cadbury's

Roger Carr, member of Industrial Development Advisory Board, fellow of Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.

Six Continents plc

David Prosser, deputy chairman of government-sponsored Financial Services National Training Organisation.

Franked investment income GLO

BP

Chief executive *Lord Browne* (ennobled 2001), trustee of British Museum.

Deputy chief executive *Dick Oliver*, member of treasury task force on modern apprenticeships.

GKN

Outgoing chairman *Sir David Lees*, director Royal Opera House.

Sir Ian Gibson, chairman of the DTI Automotive Innovation/Growth Team and member of court of the Bank of England.

Baroness Hogg, governor of BBC.

Sir Christopher Meyer, chairman, Press Complaints Commission.

ICI

Peter Ellwood, incoming chairman (1 Jan 2004) of ICI, chairman of the Royal Parks Advisory Board and chairman of The Work Foundation of Great Britain.

Loss relief group litigation GLO

Powderject

Chairman and chief executive *Paul Drayson*, generous donor to the Labour Party.

BT

Deputy chairman *Sir Anthony Greener*, chairman of University for Industry and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

Baroness Jay, Labour peer, former health minister and leader of the House of Lords.

Slough Estates plc

Chairman *Sir Nigel Mobbs*, chairman of trustees of Historic Royal Palaces and member of government's advisory committee on Business and the Environment (ACBE).

Chief executive *Ian Coull*, co-chairman of the London Sustainable Development Commission.

Weir group

Chairman *Sir Robert Smith*, member of the Financial Reporting Council, chairman of the board of trustees of the National Museums of Scotland and chairman of the Broadcasting Council for Scotland.

Christopher Clarke, member of Competition Commission.

Lord Robertson, former Labour defence secretary.

Tibbett & Britten

Executive chairman *John Harvey* CBE, member of Defra freight forum.

THE INN CROWD

ELFYN LLWYD, Welsh Nationalist MP for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, has been trying for years to alert the House of Commons to the complaints of two of his constituents, a Dr and Mrs Donnelly, who live in Barmouth, north Wales.

Llwyd was finally allocated an adjournment debate in 2000, only to be told at the last minute that responsibility for the matter had been devolved to the Northern Ireland assembly and so couldn't be heard in the Commons.

Elfyn Llwyd

When Stormont was suspended, he tried again and eventually got another debate on 21 October this year. He set out the Donnellys' case. In 1984, a fashionable Northern Ireland pub called The Stagecoach Inn was sold. The inn's shareholders, including Dr Donnelly, were represented by the well-known Belfast solicitors McCartan Turkington Breen, and the accountants Pannell Kerr Forster advised on the sale.

Dr Donnelly had about a quarter of the shares, and was not at all happy with the way his share and that of his sick mother, who was also a shareholder, was handled. It was not until 1996, 12 years after the sale, that he discovered that the pub had been bought by, among others, two partners of McCartan Turkington Breen and a partner in Pannell Kerr Forster.

Mr Llwyd described his constituents' protracted correspondence with the Law Society of Northern Ireland, in which they asked "whether it was professional or ethical for a solicitor in Northern Ireland to act for both owner and purchaser; whether it was professional or ethical for a solicitor in Northern Ireland to act for both vendor and purchaser and also to be involved in the transaction personally; whether it was ethical for a solicitor in Northern Ireland to accept a general power of attorney if he was acting for both buyer and seller and if he himself was one of the purchasers, and not to investigate the provenance of that power of attorney considering that the document was drafted by an accountant whose partner was also a purchaser and whose other partner was a witness to the signing of the power."

Mr Llwyd concluded: "Almost incredibly, the letter did not elicit any action from the Law Society."

So in August 1999 the Donnellys approached the lay observer, Professor Vincent Mageean, who supervises the Law Society's handling of complaints against solicitors in Northern Ireland. Asked about a possible conflict of interest between the Law Society and Mr Turkington, the professor said he had no reason to believe Mr Turkington had held any office in the society. *Whoops!* Two years later, in 2001, the Donnellys discovered that Mr Turkington had been a member of the Law Society's council for many years and had been its president in 1986, two years after the sale of the pub.

Confronted with these facts, the professor said he still did not feel that they constituted any form of conflict of interest. The parliamentary under secretary for Northern Ireland, Ian Pearson, said he couldn't comment in detail on the case nor on the "serious allegations" made by Mr Llwyd, but said it was "important that we consider them further". The best way to do that, he suggested, was to devolve justice functions to Northern Ireland, a very distant prospect.

In the meantime, it seems, he can do nothing. Mr Llwyd, himself a solicitor, says in 26 years practice as a solicitor and a member of the Bar, he had "not come across anything" like this case.

MMR: HEAR THE ROW

WHATEVER the merits of TV docu-dramas, the sad fact about Channel Five's Hear the Silence is that there are hundreds of parents who will have recognised themselves in Juliet Stevenson's and Andrew Woodalls' portrayal of a mother and father struggling to cope with a severely autistic child.

They have seen their previously healthy and apparently "normal" child degenerate both mentally and physically. They have fought with doctors and specialists over their child's treatment and diagnosis. They have struggled to find school places and get respite care. Relationships and families have been put under intense pressure and sometimes broken under the strain. And as any parent with a sick or damaged child has done, they have tried to find a cause and cure. Rightly or wrongly, these parents blame the MMR vaccine, which preceded their child's decline. That is their truth.

Hugh Bonneville's portrayal of Dr Andrew Wakefield (pictured right), the gastro-enterologist at the centre of the MMR controversy, is also Wakefield's truth. Once a high-flyer, his research funding did dry up. He was driven out of his job. His phone did have an intercept. He was rubbished and ostracised by the health and medical establishment and accused of being a lone and dangerous maverick pursuing "junk science".

However, the venom and derision have never been more acute than that now aimed at the drama, with most (but not all) columnists, TV critics, health chiefs, former Royal Free colleagues, science correspondents and others putting the boot in. The drama was "irresponsible" and "bad for children's health" – as is Wakefield, they said; "there is no link between MMR and autism"; "the scientific debate is over". And so on.

In fact if the Channel Five drama and televised debate afterwards revealed anything, it is that the debate is far from over. Despite a stalling in their legal action, the parents are not going to go away. They are to file papers asking for a judicial review of the decision to withdraw their legal aid. And despite widespread derision, the research is continuing.

It is simply not true that Andrew Wakefield is a junk scientist. He has so far published 128 papers and despite the slurs continues to be published in prestigious journals. Last month he wrote in the *Journal of Clinical Immunology* and his 16th article in a series looking at gut disease in autistic children is about to be published soon. None of these serious pieces is ever mentioned by his critics.

Further, it is not true that he is alone and that no one else in the world or the UK has replicated his work or shared his concerns.

In Utah researchers have published four papers on a hyper-immune response to measles virus in autistic children, including a specific response to a particular measles protein not seen in "normal" children.

In Minnesota, researchers reported in the *Journal of Neuroimmunology* that the inflammatory chemicals produced by immune cells in the children with autism were high compared with "normal" children. That too may be consistent with viral infection. "The onset of developmental regression was associated with an adverse vaccine reaction in 57 out of 71 autistic children," the researchers noted.

Several papers show an overgrowth of abnormal bacteria in the intestines of autistic children. There was an improvement in "autistic" behaviour with antibiotic treatment, indicating a gut-brain connection. That improvement was not sustained when treatment stopped, suggesting that it may not be the cause but a consequence of underlying intestinal disease.

Although not yet published, Arthur Krigsman, another paediatric gastro-enterologist working with pathologists, has identified what they believe is a chronic viral disease in the intestine, identical to that described by the Royal Free group, in some 200 children.

And despite claims that the detection of measles virus in Professor John O'Leary's pathology laboratory Dublin could not be replicated, it now has been, using similarly sensitive equipment to that used by Prof O'Leary. The virus has now been found in the blood, guts and spinal fluid of some autistic children.

Quite what the measles is doing there is the big question. The studies do not prove a cause, but an association; and they beg further investigation. If the virus is found circulating in "normal" healthy children that may go some way towards resolving the debate. But what if further research shows measles appears to persist only in those children given a certain brand of vaccine? Or brain inflammation is more likely to have occurred in children given another?

The answer from health chiefs, the scientific establishment and drug companies is that what those clinicians are recording cannot be right because worldwide epidemiological studies show no link. That would certainly be true if MMR were the only trigger of all or even a substantial part of the now acknowledged autism epidemic (in some areas as high as 1 in 80, in the Scottish highlands 1 in 47); but not if it is in any way implicated in a relatively small but significant sub-set of those children with bowel disease and regressive autism; or if it is working in association with a co-factor (such as mercury, which is being looked at in the US) that damages the developing immune system. No one has yet carried out a study looking exclusively at them –if it were possible. Putting it crudely, it's like looking for prevalence of, say, bowel cancer while considering all forms of cancers.

As the whirlwind of anger and criticism levelled at the programme, at Wakefield and at parents has shown, to even ask questions is to be labelled "anti-vaccine" or "anti-MMR".

The parents are not anti-vaccine – they took their children to be vaccinated after all. And Wakefield is not anti-vaccine: he just wants them to be as safe as they can be. No one is denying that for the vast majority of children MMR is a safe way to immunise a child.

Private Eye has been accused of writing an anti-MMR manifesto because we have called for more research — which may ultimately "prove" the vaccine safe. We want the court case to be allowed to continue to air the science openly and independently. And in the meantime we want single vaccines to be made available to maintain the "herd immunity" which everyone on both sides of the debate recognises is crucial in the fight against measles, mumps and rubella.

Some of the most vitriolic criticism has come from Dr Michael Fitzpatrick, who took part in the Channel Five debate after government health chiefs and scientists dropped out. (They said they did not want to "dignify" such a one-sided drama with their presence and be put on the defensive".

Dr Fitzpatrick himself has a child who regressed into autism after vaccination but is convinced that there is no link. Unfortunately, some of his more salient arguments in long rants on the now controversial Spiked website are undermined by gratuitous insults and inaccuracies he levels at lawyers, doctors, scientists and journalists. "The arrival of Dr Wakefield (at the TV debate) accompanied by a group of men in dark suits and a coterie of admiring middle-aged women confirmed that the campaign has acquired the aura of a fundamentalist cult," he writes.

The men in dark suits were two leading neurologists, one renowned autism expert, a gastro-enterologist and the head of a research fundraising charity; and the two "middle aged women" were a mother and a journalist – all of them invited to participate in the debate.

But this is to digress. One of the more serious allegations levelled in the past couple of weeks is that it was unethical to subject the children central to the case to spinal taps "for a speculative" result.

First, it is not speculative. Measles virus had already been found in a spinal fluid of a small number of children in the US. Further, what is being forgotten is that Dr Wakefield and other clinicians around the world are not only looking for a possible cause of autism and bowel disease in children, but a cure or treatment to alleviate symptoms.

It could equally be argued that in cases where there appears to be brain disease, a spinal tap — with its inherent low risk — is a crucial investigative process. Indeed, it is used routinely as an investigate process in autistic children in Sweden. After all, if there is ultimately proven to be a viral trigger (measles or otherwise), then maybe there can be some anti-viral treatment.

So on two grounds these clinicians give struggling and desperate parents hope. If they do not find a culprit connected to MMR – and they may well not – they may find something else. And that too is also forgotten by those who prefer trading insults and spouting nonsense about "cults" instead of calling for collaboration and informed debate.

Heather Mills
(author of Private Eye's Special Report 'MMR: The Story So Far')

FUJITSU! WHAT A SHOCKER

NO ONE will shed a tear over the sacking of EDS as supplier of software to the Inland Revenue, especially after the tax credits disaster. But who is to take EDS's place?

The answer to that question is rather difficult to unravel. An Inland Revenue press release on 11 December proudly announced that the "competitive process" for the new multi-million Aspire IT contract had been won by Cap Gemini Ernst & Young. In seven paragraphs of puffing drivel from the chairman of the Inland Revenue, Sir Nicholas Montagu, there was no mention of any other firm. So it seems Cap Gemini was alone triumphant. But just hang on a minute.

On the same day – on the website of Fujitsu – the Japanese IT company's joy was unbounded (though totally unreported here) at having won a hefty piece of the Aspire action – worth, in its view, a cool billion pounds. David Courtley, Fujitsu's chief operating officer, was quoted: "The commitment from the Inland Revenue is a reflection of their confidence in our combined strengths to deliver the Inland Revenue's obligations to the UK public."

So why didn't the IR mention Fujitsu in its announcement? One clue may be that a few days before the contract was announced, the Commons public accounts committee had issued a stinging report on the Libra project for supplying IT to magistrates' courts. After setting out some of the horrific disasters in the project, the committee described it "as one of the worst PFI deals we have seen". The Libra contractor? Why, Fujitsu of course.

PS: The Inland Revenue got off lightly, it seems, when it let EDS loose on its computer systems. Look what the company did, for example, for the justice system in the Canadian province of Ontario. When we last looked at the EDS-run "integrated justice project" in *Eye* 1045, a report had just revealed how costs spiralled while expected benefits dwindled.

The scheme, which was supposed to speed up proceedings by making files on cases electronic, has now been scrapped with "virtually no improvement" to systems after five years of work. Meanwhile, 100,000 criminal cases have been pending for more than eight months; and Ontario's provincial auditor has said the backlog means tens of thousands of criminals will walk free without going to trial. Canada's 1990 "Askov" ruling, that eight to ten months is a reasonable period before trial, means many cases will have to be stayed, withdrawn or dismissed. Well done EDS.

You can contact Paul Foot on 020 7287 3183 or the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017

In the City

GOLD is not the only South African export which carries a wealth warning. There is also Leslie Greyling who is far less well known but potentially a much greater threat to investors and creditors. For 15 years Greyling has left a wake of financial deceit and devastation with promises of corporate rescues and investment opportunities.

Six years ago Greyling was deported from the United States and now operates from Tunbridge Wells in Kent. Three years ago the US tried to get him back for his part in a major Mafia bust on Wall Street. He is now a fugitive.

A year ago the South African "financier" was promising to rescue the Jensen sports carmaker on Merseyside. Last June Greyling, together with his wife and two sons, were named as defendants in a billion dollar civil action. One victim says Greyling "has damaged every life he has touched".

Now 51 Greyling claims he had created a major estate agency business in South Africa before deciding to head for the US in 1985. Arriving on a tourist visa, he stayed illegally for another 12 years but was soon attracting attention from law enforcement and regulators.

In 1988 when based in Florida he was arrested over an outstanding bad cheque charge from Ohio. This he claimed was a misunderstanding. Two years later he first came on the regulatory radar. Greyling and others were sued by the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) for arranging a trio of bogus merger deals designed to ramp the shares of American British Enterprises which they were promoting.

One deal involved the planned purchase of a Florida restaurant chain called Mr Laff's. The SEC did not see the joke. In each case Greyling and his associates promised to inject finance but failed to do so. The SEC said American British never had the money nor the intent to do the deal. A pattern that would be repeated over and over again where Greyling was concerned.

In 1991 Greyling settled the American British civil charges without admitting guilt but promising never to engage in fraudulent securities sales. A promise he soon broke.

In 1993 Greyling surfaced as chief executive of Members Service Corp with plans to move into casinos aided by $3m of his cash for shares. The South African, described then by a visitor as an "overweight, balding man with long curly hair… sweating in his partly unbuttoned shirt and shouting into the phone", was making big waves in upscale Palm Beach. He claimed to have paid almost $6m for an oceanfront home. It was only rented.

Greyling sold a Palm Beach property and a Missouri riverboat casino site to developer Donald Trump whom he claimed as a partner. The Donald did not see it that way. Greyling did, however, hire Saudi "fixer" and casino debtor Adnan Khashoggi as a consultant on a planned theme park, Sportsworld 2000, to be sited near Disney World at Orlando.

Meanwhile a local jewellery store was suing him for $82,000 he owed on jewellery he bought in part with Members Service shares which did not materialise. Greyling was also being sued by fellow South African and fugitive from US justice Stanley Tollman. The former Chelsea director claimed Greyling had reneged on a deal to buy a hotel in Palm Beach. The owners of a small Las Vegas casino also sued over another failed deal. As a result a civil action was launched against Greyling and others claiming they had manipulated the Members Service share price for personal benefit through announcing deals that failed to complete but selling shares before the bad news hit. MSC shares went to almost $4 before collapsing to a few cents.

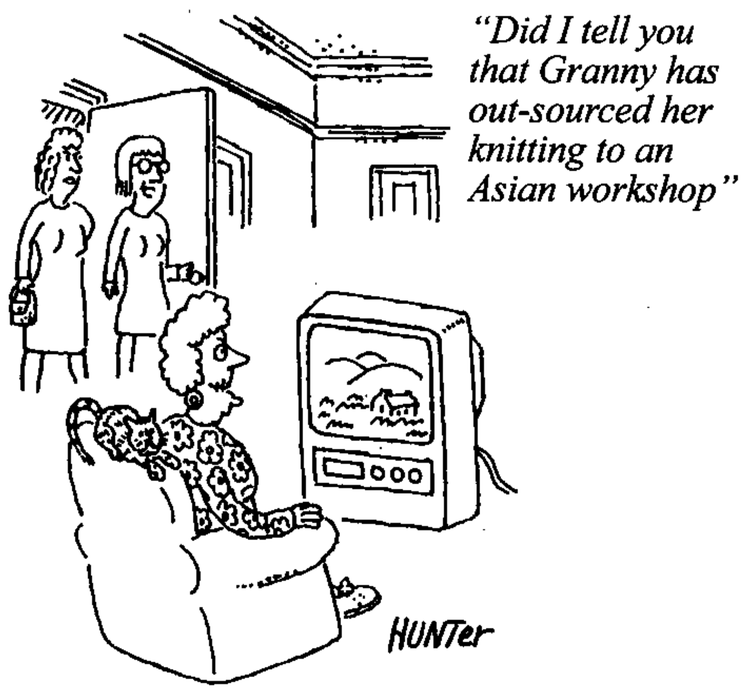
By 1995 the federal authorities were on the Greyling and MSC case. First the immigration authorities caught up with the South African's long expired US visa. He was arrested and pleaded guilty to making false statements in connection with fraudulently obtaining a US visa.

Then Greyling's co-director Art Feher and Vancouver stock promoter Philip Sung were charged with fraud over offshore sales of unregistered MSC shares. More than $3m in fictitious assets had been reported to investors and regulators, it was alleged. Greyling says he was their victim too.

Greyling and friends were also doing their thing at Aspen Marine Group which owned a Florida marina. Millions of shares were sold to overseas investors before Aspen went into bankruptcy.

Greyling thought he had cut a deal on the immigration charge to be deported with little or no jail time. But a federal judge, advised of what he described as "fraudulent acts", decided to take Greyling off the streets. Greyling was still there in March 1996 when he was indicted on fraud and money-laundering charges in Orlando over selling unregistered MSC shares and using the proceeds to pay personal debts. Also charged were Feher and Greyling's lawyer Daniel Boyar who surfaced in the Jensen negotiations.

A year later Greyling pleaded guilty to one count of securities fraud and agreed to immediate deportation to South Africa as part of a plea bargain to avoid a second trial after the first jury was deadlocked. Boyar also pleaded guilty to a misdemeanour and was fined. Feher had died of an apparent heart attack or committed suicide, according to Greyling, while on the run in Mexico. Because he had been in jail since September 1995,



"Did I tell you that Granny has out-sourced her knitting to an Asian workshop"

Greyling was released, deported and banned from re-entering the US without permission of the attorney-general.

But this did not stop Greyling continuing his activities. While still in a Florida jail Greyling's English wife Anne acquired control of another "shell" company, Wasatch International Group. Wasatch acquired a Greyling company Caribbean Holdings for $67m in shares. Caribbean claimed to own a site for a Bahamas casino. Soon afterwards Wasatch offered to inject $600,000 into a bankrupt cruise line with one ship in return for a priority position among creditors. This fell through. So did a similar deal to help refinance Kiwi International Airlines with $5m. When only $100,000 arrived Kiwi pulled out. Despite further promises no deal was done.

Deported and with a prison record, Leslie Greyling could no longer be a director of any company so his wife began to appear more and more. Such as in Sterling Worldwide which was pushed by US "boiler room" operations. Leslie Greyling was described as a consultant.

Then in June 2000 the South African really made the big time. He was named as one of 120 defendants charged as part of Operation Uptick which exposed the control of Wall Street "boiler rooms" controlled by two New York Mafia families which had taken $50m from investors in a series of "pump and dump" schemes. FBI informants infiltrated the brokerage firm.

Greyling was arrested in London and charged with bribing brokers to hype shares in the former Wasatch International which was now called E-Pawn.com and was in the hot internet portal business. Greyling negotiated the purchase of the Florida business in London. He and three others were charged with securities fraud and bribery. Greyling was accused of being an undisclosed principal in E-Pawn controlling with his wife, who was not charged, 80 percent of the shares. His son Clinton was on the board. He was not charged. Former Irish prime minister Albert Reynolds was involved as an adviser to E-Pawn and brokered an aborted deal for E-Pawn to take over Dublin-based Marlborough International.

Greyling's associates hired mobbed-up DMN Capital to push E-Pawn whose shares shot from $1 to $9. This was helped by the sending of 27 million spam e-mails to potential investors. He is accused of handing over one million shares as a bribe. No evidence was presented that Greyling was an associate of organised crime. He says he was set up by the FBI informants.

Attempts by the US attorney in Manhattan to extradite Greyling failed for legal reasons. Greyling says there was no evidence. He is still, however, wanted in New York. His three co-defendants have yet to be tried. A trial could take place next year.

Undeterred, in 2001 Greyling surfaced with another ex-con, the one-time Australian tycoon Alan Bond, in a deal to reverse Florida-based Vector Medical Technologies into Utah mining "shell" Gold Standard. Vector claimed to have a cure for AIDS. Bond was said to be raising capital in London for the company a year after leaving jail for pillaging Bell Resources. Greyling was also part of the financing plans. But in August 2001 Vector pulled out.

Then last year Greyling appeared as the proposed rescuer of Jensen Motors in Speke. He says he offered to buy the assets from the administrators for £1.8m through an offshore company – others say he offered £3m. Greyling claimed to be being backed by Nicholas Wallis whose family had sold a stores chain to Sears. Wallis had been involved during the 1980s with retailers Amber Day before Philip Green and fashion group Martin Ford. Wallis decided against going ahead and no bid came from Greyling. He says the failure was not his fault and that Wallis is still a friend.

Last June Steven Bazsuly, who sold the E-Pawn business to Wasatch in 2000, launched a $1.2bn civil class action against Greyling and his family on behalf of the now renamed Ubuy Holdings which he runs. The action alleges fraud against the four Greylings and 50 others involved in the E-Pawn flop. The shares are now fractions of a cent. Greyling is accused of using 16m shares as a down payment for a 175-ft yacht "The Thunder" owned by a Jersey company. Greyling says the yacht was merely chartered.

As ever Greyling denies any wrongdoing and what he calls these "wild allegations". It remains to be seen whether it will be possible to successfully bring the proceedings against him while he remains outside the US. The South African says he does not intend to defend himself in Florida. According to Greyling, who is clearly highly accident-prone, he has always been the victim of business associates or bullying US government agencies. He admits his legal problems and says he always make a full disclosure of his past to those with whom he does business. It is up to them then to do due diligence if they want to take the risk. Be that as it may, the E-Pawn story and what went before shows what happens when, ahem, "Ubuy" from Leslie Greyling.

IT'S not all pen-pushing and paperwork at the Inland Revenue. There's fine wine drinking too.

Revenue top brass decamped recently to France for a "lavish get-to-know-you" with Cap Gemini Ernst & Young, shortly before it was announced that the French-owned company had won a juicy IT contract from the Revenue.

The very fine wines consumed apparently came from a vineyard owned by a Cap Gemini executive. Reports say some of the Revenue officials found the scale of the hospitality almost embarrassing. No doubt they will all make a full declaration of it on their next tax return...

'Slicker'

● *Fujitsu what a shocker, p.29*

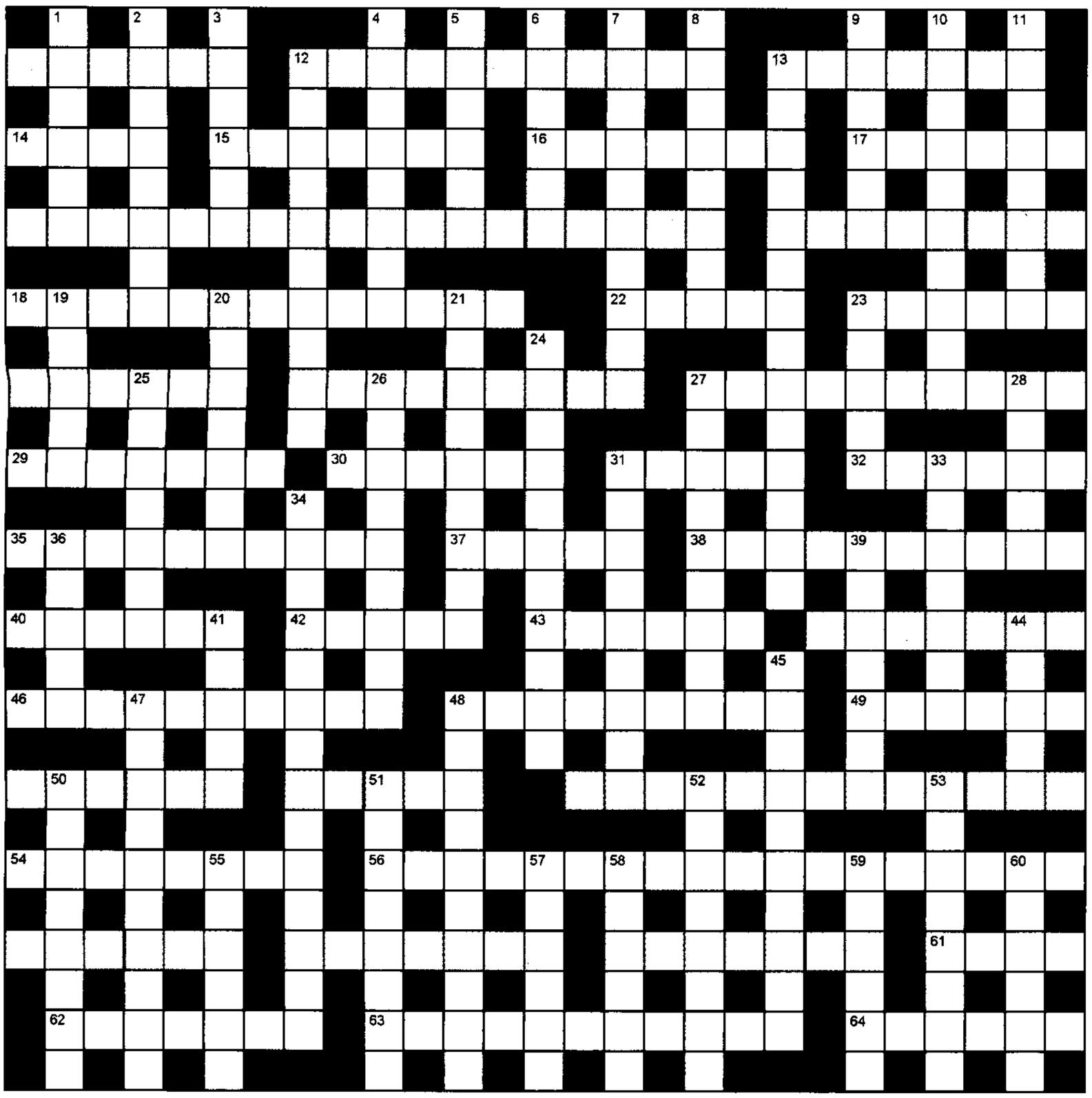
The last Stock Horror showed share performances over two years, not one, as it said. Our apologies.

— 'Bruin'

EYE CROSSWORD 251

£250 PRIZE!

by Cyclops



The (unclued) words to be entered in the shaded squares make up a wry poetic observation on its debut forty years ago. (The shaded words are in the right order on the grid.)

ACROSS

14 Hey, listen to this: sounds like the snake's drunk (4)
15 Wife taking off Edward's top and shaking with lust and longing (7)
16 Disease working girls caught in field (7)
17 Erection doubtful after second time (6)
18 Retiring leader of party: "Spin is not effing on – time to go" (10,3)
22 Dicky grabs Doris – not a scene of happy innocence (5)
23 Courtney Love's tops put on Chip ("Man, it's so hackneyed!") (6)
27 Barfing and rearing (10)
29 I mount round behind, flipping giving a big wave (7)
30 Getting one for nothing, Monica tweaked nut (6)
31 Heroin: flop as a great leveller? (1-4)
32 Buzz when clad in iron / frilly hem (6)
35 It's a fag when corrupt official conceals names (6-4)
37 Symbol of member's drink to those common people (5)
38 Chappy tormented with hots for sex maniac? (10)
40 Camp sailor gets end away in slut's embrace (6)
42 Brummie covers inside of genital area (5)
43 To stimulate, or, in France, to enter rear (6)
46 Affair before breakfast? End up in jail (2,8)
48 Crappy Leeds add "Keeper's first to run off" (9)
49 Dukes without right degrees (6)
54 A bit tiny, Lil's bust, but all round success (8)
56 "Join together at sea and couple" as boozy sailors say (6,3,4,5)
61 Vicar's evidently hiding his real mouthpiece? (4)
62 McCartney? Rocker's beginning to get 'starry' (7)
63 I never write "Pisspoor Paxman" (11)
64 Liberal gets hint, being in the way of deflated member (6)

DOWN

1 Crafty personal transport from Stones' quay we hear (3-3)
2 Structural support, very French, inserted in wobbly bust (8)
3 I never expected that Oval Office order from Clinton? (4,2)
4 Shagging traditionally on the menu at Christmas (8)
5 Monsieur's coming in later, perhaps, for ring round member (6)
6 Overturned toilet – hindrance or benefit to the drinker? (6)
7 Like Gaul, fall on right breast in A&E (10)
8 Getting back to health minister's last point: "Firm – extremely!" (8)
9 Old court favourite, one big laugh, is buggered (6)
10 Feature of the Tory party (hint: fuggin' terrible – I should oust useless leader) (10)
11 How quickly the night-time celeb's caught by the paparazzi? (2,1,5)
12 Bimbo's top Lennie is s-shaking but not feeling (10)
13 Wilby heard amid two lots of drunken yobs – an excuse for laddish behaviour (4,4,2,4)
19 Taken by students, Es are about the flipping limit! (5)
20 One who likes to give a blade a good rollocking (7)
21 2p pieces as topless knicker parts? (9)
23 Singer who's "the face of rock"? Hardly! (5)
24 One who hardens a man to the disappointment of non-consummation (5-6)
25 Not much in Hammersmith and Fulham (7)
26 For one who likes a rough ride, crazy Blairite accepts Ken's lead (5,4)
27 Michael Howard was modelled after topless tabloid work (9)
28 Not the day for, say, Elton John (losing a bit on top) (5)
31 One who recommends The Cure be taken in very small doses (9)
33 Howard-led Tories unlikely to get this popular energy? (2,5)
34 Made a barrister shout "Hislop, go get the drinks!" (6,2,3,3)
36 Go one better and expose party as gay (5)
39 Cautious, the bloke having grim feud with Labour's leader (7)
41 Stabbed in the back, maybe, by failed US candidate? (5)
44 Hardly the lead in *Unisex Transvestite* (5)
45 Patronising sort of complaint about name given to player (10)
47 Sod all to writer/landlord which anyone can read (4,6)
48 The hard stuff makes Nick, we hear, pee on ex (5,5)
50 Crap start to Martin Amis' *Hun*: "It's a people-centred thing" (8)
51 Anita and Sam burst a spot on the 'underside' of Oz (8)
52 Brenda gives very pinnacle of head (3,5)
53 Cops member on second of beam ends (4-4)
55 They don't come any better, ladies when vibrated (6)
57 Long-serving leader's high voice (not a leader of Tories) (6)
58 Row at home leads to bite (6)
59 A bit of a tit gets leg over – entreaty cut short (6)
60 Barbara and Brenda's sort of place (6)

£250 prize to first solution opened on 2.1.04 Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.

Solution to Crossword No. 250

Winner: S. JOHNSON

ACROSS: 3 ABC 8 Gobbing 9 Rooftop 10 Ultra 11 Gesturing 12/21 A kick up the Khyber 15 Arses 17/14 The Dead Sea 18/27 Earls Court 20 Irksome 22 Samosas 25 Mayoralty 28 Cleanse 29 Raisins 30 Dud.
DOWN: 1 Abstains 2 Hijack 3 Agog 4 Cross-dress 5 Copulate 6 Stains 7 Spyglass 8 Gouda 13 Pot-bellied 15 A bit much 16 Sporrans 19 Rasputin 23 Muck in 24 Setts 26 Yard.

Treat yourself to

PRIVATE EYE

Here are 8 reasons why!

1] **26** issues of cutting-edge journalism for **ONLY £21***.

2] **SAVE 38%** on the news-stand price.

3] It's the most famous satirical magazine in the world.

4] Order by Direct Debit (online or by telephone) and we'll give you THREE FREE ISSUES.

5] It's so easy to subscribe – just a telephone call will do.
Dial **0870 750 1714** (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm) giving us your credit card details and we'll do the rest.
Overseas callers: +44 (0) 1795 414 871

6] It's a **GREAT MAGAZINE.**

7] Er…

8] That's it.

(That's enough reasons – Ed.)

You can also order online at www.private-eye.co.uk or use the order form below.

ORDER FORM TO: **PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS**, PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 8FA.

Please send PRIVATE EYE for one year (26 issues) to:

Title ..... Initial ..... Surname .....

Address .....

..... Postcode .....

GIFT ORDER? Please give your name and address details below and we will send you a Private Eye gift card:

Title ..... Initial ..... Surname .....

Address .....

..... Postcode .....

Your daytime telephone no .....

❑ UK £21.00* ❑ Europe & Eire £29.00 ❑ Rest of World £35.00

❑ I enclose a Sterling cheque payable to PRIVATE EYE (overseas subscribers can also pay by International Money Order)

OR ❑ Please charge my MasterCard/VISA/SWITCH (issue number____)

Card number |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|

Expiry date |_|_|_|_| (SWITCH only)

Signature ..... Date .....

Email .....

Source code: N1096

Do you think you understand Mankind's history?

Think again.

A researcher into ancient history recently made an important discovery that science and religion try to ignore.

Crichton E M Miller's work has been read by millions of people through magazines, the World Wide Web and his book, The Golden Thread of Time ISBN 0-9541639-0-7

Crichton's discoveries reveal the secrets of how our prehistoric ancestors could tell the time to within seconds and navigate the oceans using the stars.

The instrument that they used was the Celtic cross.

This efficient pre historic instrument has been awarded two British Patents.

Crichton has discovered that the Ancient Egyptians concealed a working cross in the Great Pyramid in Egypt.

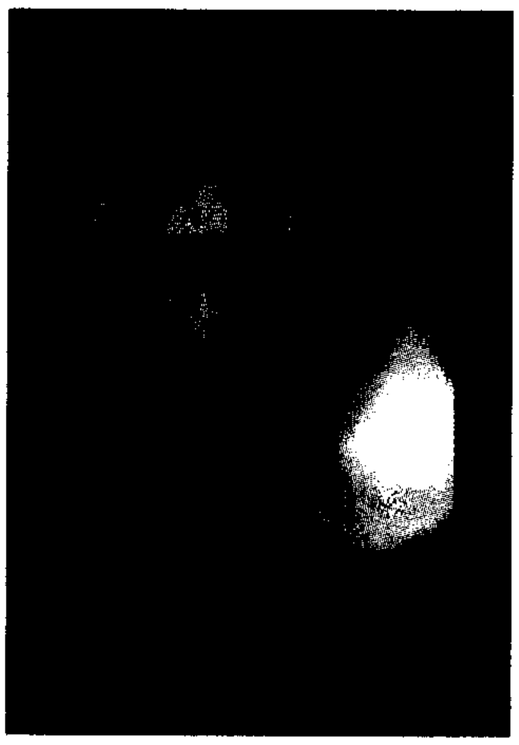
Why then is this vital discovery not mainstream news for the benefit of the general public?

The answer is that the truth is too controversial for many, who fear upsetting the status quo.

Like many so called Pagan ideas this phenomenal instrument and its techniques have been absorbed into Christianity and forgotten over the centuries.

Why is this knowledge important now?

In a world where religious division and disinformation causes such misery to the human race, some at least should have the chance to know the truth.



The Golden Thread of Time.

ISBN 0-9541639-0-7.

Crichton E M Miller.

Pendulum Publishing.

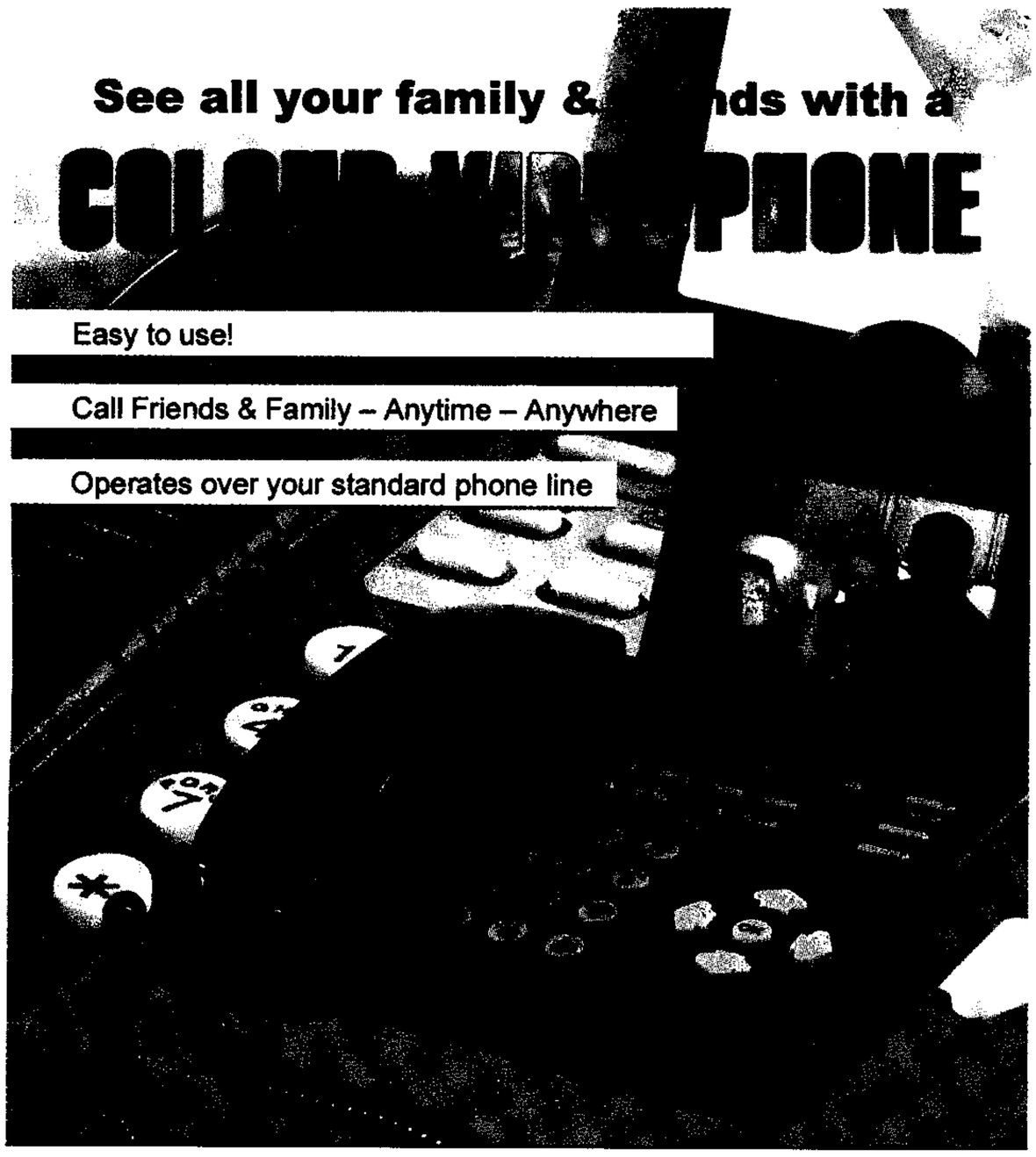
Order through any good bookshop

For secure mail order

01788 826963

www.pendulumpublishing.co.uk

www.amazon.co.uk


See all your family & nds with a
PHONE
Easy to use!
Call Friends & Family – Anytime – Anywhere
Operates over your standard phone line

To see our full range of colour videophones visit our online store today!

Order line 01787 211991

E-mail: info@theVCcompany.co.uk

web: www.theVCcompany.co.uk

visual communications

PRIVATE EYE BINDERS

THE PERFECT WAY TO LOOK AFTER YOUR PRIVATE EYE COLLECTION

Each binder holds 26 issues – a year's worth – and is attractively bound in dark blue with the PRIVATE EYE logo in white on the spine. The UK price is now £10 including postage, packing and VAT. For overseas orders please add 70p per binder.

Order online at www.private-eye.co.uk click on "binders".

Or call 0870 750 1713, Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm (Overseas call +44 (0) 1795 414 870)

Or complete the form below and send with your payment to: PRIVATE EYE Binders, PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA.

I enclose cheque for £..... payable to Private Eye.

No of binders ..... OR please charge

MasterCard/Visa/Switch (Issue no_____)

Card number |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_| (Switch only) |_|_|_|

Card expires |_|_|_|_|

Title . . . . . Initial . . . . . Surname. . . . . .

Address. . . . . .

. . . . . .

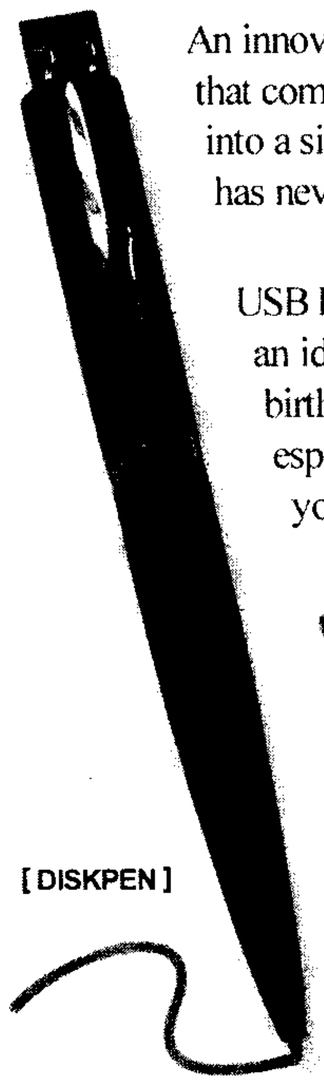
Email. . . . . .

Please print and use the postcode

THE ULTIMATE CORPORATE GIFT

Introducing: DiskPen

All the functions of a Pen Drive in a writing tool!



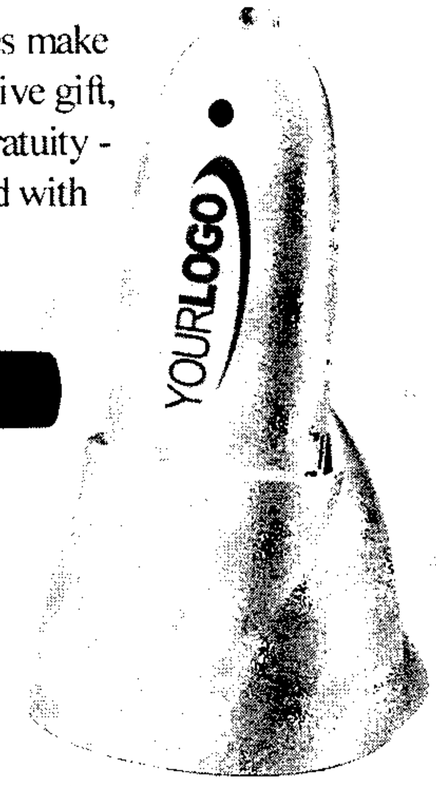
An innovative new USB memory flash drive storage device that combines functionality, appearance and ease of use into a single unit. Making computer memory transportable has never been so chic!

USB DiskPens and PenDrives make an ideal corporate or executive gift, birthday present or other gratuity - especially once customised with your company logo:

> Prices starting from just

£29 +VAT

32, 64, 128, 256, 512MB Available



[PENDRIVE]

Jade tec

sales 0113 281 7788
fax 0870 138 4213
sales@jadetec.co.uk

www.jadetec.co.uk

Prices exclude vat and carriage. Prices are subject to change without notice. E&OE

Special announcement for classified advertisers

As an enhancement to the service we offer readers, you can now submit your classified advert by simply going to

www.eyeadvertise.co.uk

So start 2004 with some online action and click your way to 663,000 potential customers.

Merry Christmas everyone!

★ STOCKBROKERS • DOCTORS • ADVERTISING • ACCOUNTANTS • ARCHITECTS ★
MARKETING • DESIGNERS
EDUCATIONALISTS • WRITERS
drawing down *the* moon
PERSONAL INTRODUCTION CONSULTANTS - THE FIRST AND FINEST
"a partner for life...that's where Drawing Down the Moon comes in"
FINANCIAL TIMES
020-7937 6263
www.drawingdownthemoon.co.uk
Head Office: Adam & Eve Mews, Kensington. *City Office:* Cannon Street
24 hours. Member ABIA. Est. 1984
★ MEDIA COMPANY DIRECTORS • LAWYERS • PR • BANKERS • SCIENTISTS ★

a cartoon is not just for christmas...
the cartoon gallery can now be found exclusively at www.cartoongallery.co.uk
hundreds of original published cartoons by britain's top cartoonists all available to buy.
...but they do make a unique christmas gift
for themed cartoons search the subject index
football
viewing appointments can be made at gosh! 39 great russell street, london wc1b 3ph
tel: 020 7636 1011 fax: 020 7436 5053
email: cartoongallery@easynet.co.uk

The Blue Angel Club
welcomes you and your friends for a really unforgettable evening. Drink, or dine and dance in luxurious surroundings and be served or entertained by our Angels.
Open Monday to Friday from 6.30pm until late
Membership not required.
17 Little Portland Street, London W1N 5DE Tel: 020 7636 2178

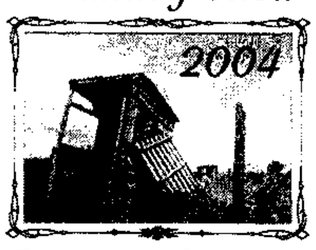
...and suppers too!
Onlylunch
the professional introduction service
HOW PEOPLE LIKE YOU MEET PEOPLE LIKE YOU
0800 908900
www.onlylunch.co.uk

THE WORLD OF NASRUDIN by Idries Shah
HOW TO BE WISE 'Father,' asked Nasrudin's youngest son one day, 'how can I become as wise as you?'
'If a knowledgeable man is talking, listen to him,' replied the Mulla, 'and if you are talking, listen to yourself.'
Hardback 0 863040 86 1 450pp £14.95
OCTAGON PRESS (Dept. 16), P.O.Box 227, London N6 4EW
Tel: (020) 8348 9392 www.octagonpress.com

Loveand friends.com
internet dating for thinking people

BIRTHDAY NEWSPAPERS
Births, Birthdays, Weddings, Christenings, Anniversaries, Retirements. Papers from archives 1642-2003. Sundays from 1915. Quality presentations. Same day dispatch.
REMEMBER WHEN
445 Brighton Road, Croydon, Surrey CR2 6EU
www.remember-when.co.uk
020 8763 6363
or call FREE 0500 520 000

To reach over
600,000
potential customers in 2004
please call David Lancaster on
020 7878 2316 or
Carol Imlay on
020 7878 2303 to discuss
advertising in
PRIVATE EYE

Luxury Shed Calendar


Luxury Shed Calendar 2004 now available! This celebration of fine examples of allotment architecture follows on from the success of this year's calendar.
Luxury Caravan Calendar

A humorous appreciation of 12 lost or forgotten holiday chariots. Each one, in characteristic condition and boldly renamed, is captured in this Luxury Calendar.
www.thesheds.com
£5.99 each + p&p (£1.00 UK, £1.50. Europe, £2.50 Int.)
Transglobal Emporium,
P.O.Box 116, Cambridge, CB4 2EA. UK.
Order line open 9.00am to 5.00pm 01223 316206

T-Shirts Postcards Posters
www.anyoldicon.com

Don't send Flowers...
send r*fur
and your message will last forever...

Birthdays, Anniversaries, Good Luck? Whatever the occasion, show them you care, send the bear! r*fur carries your personal message in his rucksack with pride and style. And he's delivered overnight** to the destination of your choice
CALL 0870 755 7387
OR VISIT www.sendrfur.com
ONLY £35*
*Plus postage & packing
** UK Mainland next working day delivery by Royal Mail Special Delivery Service. Overseas destinations available at extra cost
Approx 20cm tall. r*fur © Bo Bear Designs 2002 - all rights reserved.

DO YOU REALLY KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON?
SUSPECT SOMETHING'S GOING ON? FIND OUT - WITHOUT BEING FOUND OUT!
Disloyalty can be dangerous. It's often damaging and invariably hurtful. Commercially, it's usually expensive. You may not like the idea of using 'bugging' equipment but it can heighten your awareness and help you anticipate. You'll be amazed how we conceal microphones and tiny cameras in the most innocent and ordinary everyday objects.

LORRAINE ELECTRONICS SURVEILLANCE
716 Lea Bridge Road, London E10 6AW.
Fax: 020 8558 1338
Central London Showroom:
59 South Audley Street, W1K 2QN
Web Site: www.lorraine.co.uk
TEL: 020 8558 4226

PRIVATE EYE

CLASSIFIED
020 7240 9129

£2.50 per word (£25 min charge)
Colour box £12 Box number £12
All charges VAT inclusive

Deadline for January 23rd issue: January 13th

You can email your ad to: private-eye@mcmslondon.co.uk or fax: 020 7379 7118

Reply to Box Numbers at address below:
Private Eye,
McMillan-Scott,
10 Savoy Street
London WC2E 7HR

EYE ART

EVEREST. BEAUTIFUL BRONZE sculpture. www.landscapesculpture.com

ENDICOTTE JOHNSON DESIGN LTD. Fine neoclassical- style furniture. Have you considered living in the sheer luxury of this style? Stop dreaming . . . Cellular 07717 811811

EYE COLLECT

PLEASURE AND INVESTMENT. Autographs and memorabilia. Call Europe's largest dealer – Freephone 0800 731 0852 or www.frasersautographs.com

GENUINELY SCARCE old books. The only copies on the internet. £30-£500. Also book-cataloguing software. www.theonlycopy.com

ANTIQUE CLOCK RESTORATION. Harrogate, Stamford and London. Experienced, qualified and insured. Many satisfied Eye readers. www.clockrepairers.co.uk 020 7504 7082

OLD FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES wanted. 020 8306 2194 email: David.sturge@btopenworld.com

EYE NOVELTIES

BIRTHDAY Newspapers FREEPHONE 0800 906609 www.historic-newspapers.co.uk

TITLES – LORD, LADY etc. Tel/Fax 0800 652 6641. www.elitetitles.co.uk.

PROMOTE... Your Product... Your Business... YOURSELF with full colour postcards at competitive prices. For sample pack phone 020 7737 7766 or E-mail: cardencounters@btclick.com

DO YOU HANKY PANKY? Check out the best party game for years at www.hankypankygames.com

WWW.CUFFLINKSCOMPANY.CO.UK – novelty cufflinks, ties, card cases, keyrings and other gifts.

A 'TITLE' plus land for only £40. Oh yes! www.scottishhighlandtitles.co.uk

MUGS OF MASS DESTRUCTION. Find them at www.poisonmugs.co.uk

FOR THE SPORTS LOVER: 'Play The Game' CD, £10.99. www.justaccordmusic.com

ANNOUNCEMENT GALLERY and Reply Service. Special occasions family / friends Site-Cicles.co.uk

BE DIFFERENT THIS YEAR. Give 'em a real game! www.realgamescompany.com

MAGIC BY POST, free catalogue. Tel: 01179 774334 website: magicbypost.com

BE DIFFERENT THIS YEAR. Give 'em a real game! www.realgamescompany.com

MAGIC BY POST, free catalogue. Tel: 01179 774 334 website: magicbypost.com

WITTY DITTY-WRITER extraordinaire, composes lyrical tributes for birthdays, anniversaries, special occasions. Seven-day delivery. Reasonable rates. John 020 8342 8762 / 07770 741 756 / email chamberlainburns@yahoo.co.uk.

ARE YOU HIP? Check out: www.hiplist.co.uk

KINGDOM OF MUGG. £2.25 War Game Verse. www.authorsonline.co.uk.authors2001.bidd.king01.downloadhim

CRACKLING LOG FIRE DVD or VHS. Transform your blank TV screen, from £7.99 + £1.40 p&p. Tel: 01753 623276 www.talkscience.co.uk

EYE BET

CASINO BLACKJACK. Intellectual property for sale. Lucrative opportunity. Information / prospectus, 01983 407769

EYE ESCAPE

READ 'BEING THE BEST' by Nicholas Bate. ISBN 1841125210

DOES YOUR TRAVEL AGENT KNOW THEIR ARSOLI FROM THEIR ELBERT? Unique service: we try providing what you want! 01423 867226. ksales@ryedaletravel.co.uk, ABTA 28716.6

TRULY AUSTRALIA truly different. Tailor-make your own holiday. Visit www.trulyAustralia.com

BEACH HOLIDAYS BORING? Chamonix-Mont-Blanc climbing courses. www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk 07980 310 253

EXCLUSIVE MARBELLA ESTATES offer luxury Rentals and Sales in the Marbella area www.exclusive-marbella.com From UK: 0871 734 0990

STAY WITH THE STARS? Clear air and pure water. Try the real thing @ Colwall Park Hotel, Malvern – Courtesy & Care Award. Restaurant of the Year Award. Gourmet breaks from £75.00 pppn 2+ nts. 01684 540000 – www.colwall.com

EYE FINANCE

WE INCORPORATE companies UK and Overseas. Tel: 01306 888542. www.formacompany.com/pe

KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS? Know your crooks too! Regulatory Intelligence Agency. www.the-ria.com

WWW.THEMORTGAGECOMPANY.INFO Domain only £500k + transfer costs. Tel: 07976 761 333

FOREIGN EXCHANGE - SMALL PRIVATES? ... or large commercial deals! Why donate to banks? - Best rates - No Commission - Worldwide Remittance. Cash or account. CHEQUES CASHED INSTANTLY. Pay Day Advance-Personal cheques cashed and held 28 days. CREDIT CARD ADVANCES. INTERNET/COMPUTER CENTRE - Full service. Courses! Open 7 days, 24 hours a day. Interchange. 4 Marble Arch London W1H 7AP. John on 0800 197 4464

CONCERNED ABOUT CGT/IHT? Our research unearthed some surprising facts. To learn of legislative defects and opportunities available visit www.sarfed.co.uk

EXPERIENCED BUSINESSMAN with capital prepared to invest in established company to help expansion or in start-up needing help to develop. £10k to £100k. Reply Box 77455

EYE HELP

SPEECHWRITING BY BRITAIN'S LEADING PROFESSIONAL. Laughter fully guaranteed! Corporate, Social, Political. Strictly confidential. Visa/Mastercard. Call MITCH MURRAY – 01624 622660.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY CLAIMS. Lost out due to bad advice? Why don't you sue your adviser? Contact GORVINS SOLICITORS and we'll do it for you. FREEPHONE 0800 214531 or E-mail enquiries@gorvins.com

LET DOWN BY Sue, Grabbit and Runne? Don't let them get away with it. Professional negligence claims on a no win no fee basis. Freephone 08000 523620 or visit www.proneg.co.uk.

SORT IT! Obsessive-compulsive organises files, archives, libraries. Business or personal, computer or paper. Free quote. 07771 562863 – sorted@meister.com

DO YOU WANT companionship, conversation? Educated lady resides in Spain, available for holidays, cultural visits and social occasions etc. Rates available on request. 0034 666 269128

VIAGRA: GENUINE PFIZER tablets, cheapest price guaranteed. paypill.com

INSTANT WEBSITES AND ESHOPS. Free trial, takes 10 minutes to set up, professional, customisable and fast. Unlimited help and support. From £9.99 a month. Sign up at www.productiveweb.co.uk/eye

BANKRUPTCY ASSOCIATION: Independent advice on debt problems. Website: www.theba.org.uk Telephone: 01524 64305

BESPOKE CAR PROCUREMENT, personal service. 0777 929 0444 or notimeatall@fsmail.net

YOU MUST BE CRAZY if you don't check the saving at www.thecheapestelectricity.co.uk, and save on gas as well at www.lowestpricegas.co.uk For more info: info@thecheapestelectricity.co.uk info@lowestpricegas.co.uk

HOPE FOR CHILDREN has guaranteed places in the Edinburgh Marathon, 13th June 2004. Tel 01442 262287; www.hopechallenges.co.uk

EYE EARN

READ 'BEING THE BEST' by Nicholas Bate ISBN 1841125210

OPPORTUNITY FOR ONE PERSON. I will teach you everything I know. Director of UK Operations for established, profitable, solvent, north Surrey overseas property agency offers to train his successor in order to retire in 12 months. Organisational, administrative, sales/marketing and telephone skills/experience an advantage. Tangible expression of commitment will be required. Initially, please fax your details to 020 8770 1656. They are guaranteed to be treated in the strictest confidence.

EYE MOVES

MOVING STUFF. Transit couriers and light removals professional, insured. 020 7622 0511.

JAMES MOVES your household/office possessions. Boxes/storage available. Tel: 020 8208 1497

EYE HEAR

JUKEBOX PARTY HIRE. CDs and/or 7" vinyl. Including ROCKOLA BUBBLER. £150+ delivered. 020 8318 2852 – www.wce-jukeboxes.co.uk

ROBBIE FOX, solo artist, sings hits of the 60s. Lively, big sound, fun gigs; call 07855 305679

EYE JOBS

ROCK 'N' ROLL TOUR GUIDES wanted. We run an afternoon mini-bus tour of London's rock sites. Interested in passing on your rock 'n' roll knowledge and enthusiasm? www.beatles-beatles-beatles.com Email for details: bruce@backroadstouring.co.uk

JAVA/J2EE DEVELOPER - recently relocated by current employer to depressing corporate fish tank, seeks interesting alternative. Central/South-East London, or Kent. Email not_A_fish2003@yahoo.co.uk

EYE READ

FREE BOOKSEARCH – No purchase obligation. Twiggers Booksearch – 020 8878 8644. booksearch@twiggers.com

WWW.ICEHOUSEBOOKS.CO.UK We buy and sell your kind of books 0116 292 1964

PRIVATE EYE

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISERS

As an enhancement to the service that we offer readers, you can now submit your classified advertisement by simply going to: www.eyeadvertise.co.uk

Merry Christmas everyone!

CHOOSE THE NEWS at www.punchy comment.com

INTERESTING BOOKS seldom in the shops, direct from publishers – www.InfinityJunction.com

GET STUFFED! Own the cookbook to ITV's late nite cookery series £6.50 inc. p&p. www.poison mugs.co.uk/get stuffed.htm

DOGMAN – a book for children. www.johndowie.com/dogman

WORTH A VISIT? Oh yes! www.francis bennion.co

EYE SELL

OLD PERSIAN RUGS – mostly £100 – £3000. Shed not shop – telephone first. DESMOND NORTH, East Peckham, Kent. 01622 871353.

NEED A NEW HI-FI? For anything from DVD to Minidisc, surround sound to CD – nip down to RICHER SOUNDS and pick up the lowest-priced gear in the UK... GUARANTEED! For a free bargain-packed catalogue, call 0845 1 300 200

TELEPHONES. ANTIQUE, Fun, Designer. Kiosks. Sold/Bought. www.telephonelines.net. 01242 583699.

DONEGAL PEAT (or log) fire this winter 12x20 kg bags, £120 delivered. Ph 02890 838111 anytime.

AFFORDABLE, ORIGINAL modern art. Buy online www.davidjsimpson.co.uk

EYES B/C 1964-1999. Offers Tel: 01380 828666

EYE WANT

SPERM DONOR required by childless couple. Confidentiality assured. E-mail: donorsearch@hotmail.com

HI – WOULD YOU LIKE TO BUY a house with me – in Surrey? Worth a try? bonavistas2003@yahoo.co.uk Plus Box number 77482 Iona

EYE CARE

ERECTION CORRECTION TABLETS, cheapest on earth! www.generic-viagras.com

MASSAGE THERAPY: Take time to relax and indulge in a luxury full body massage. Tel: 020 7713 8531 www.remimassage.com

ERECTION PERFECTION with you by noon tomorrow. 0701 071 8424. www.viagib.com EUROMED

DEEP, RELAXING full body massage, private, sensual. Mobile: 07900 363 641 Knightsbridge / home / hotel visit also possible, open every day

FROM ULTRA MED IT'S TRUE BLUE! The amazing alternative to Viagra. No prescription necessary, 8 tablets for only £29.99 + p&p. Credit Card order line 0871 983 0363 www.ultrathrills.co.uk

VIAGRA GENUINE PFIZER tablets cheapest price guaranteed. paypill.com tel: 07050 139393

EYE NEED

HELP! STUCK IN WALES . . . need money to get out. 20-55-68 A/N 50170348

MATURE STUDENT seeks funds to finish last year of nursing degree. Abbey x10735605mur

YOUNG WOMAN WANTS future – Depression caused debt of 15K, now debt causing more problems. Lloyds/TSB 30-99-38, 07115128. Any help appreciated

32 YEARS COMMUTING. Stressed, can escape, need help. Thank you. Abbey National 0900 00, A/C 00050005, R8069275COS

BITCH-BUSTING MENS MOVEMENT desperately under-funded. www.ukmm.org.uk A/N Lloyds/TSB 87371279731160

QUALIFIED GARDENER needs up to £12,000. Gardening in return? barbarabar ian@aol.com

HIGHLY ACCLAIMED interior designer faces huge losses due to rogue client. Seeks new patrons urgently. All projects considered, creativity assured. Email david@alacarter.com

MY VISION IS SIMPLE and comes from my core; life is short so I want to do what I adore: working with nature, rediscovering soul, building community, becoming whole. Starting from here aware of how I relate, using my gifts I wish to create places that heal us and nourish our senses. Now all I need is some help with expenses...! LTSB 30-96-06 01833538 Many thanks. Reply Box 77208

RAW TALENT. Young female photographer seeks funding/support to make my dreams come true. Barclays 20-88-13 50728365 startswithadream@hotmail.com

NEED SPERM NOW. Child bride reverse my vasectomy please. Barclays Bank 30-31-52 A/C 40667137

ARTIST, TALENTED, DEDICATED – refused MA funding. £7,000, please contribute. Natwest 55-61-01 43454836

SPONSOR A SONG! Need 6K for 20 wonderful newly commissioned classical songs. British composers, French texts. Premier July 04. Please help. Thank you. Abbey National 09-06-66 A/N 40372113

PROFESSIONAL seeks discrete Central London property to rent. Tel: 0779 1553915

EYE DRINK

GIVE YOUR LOVER ONE! Vintage wine champagne port from £19.99 www.vintagewinegifts.co.uk

TASTE 25 TOP CHAMPAGNES over a long weekend on an Arblaster & Clarke Wine Tour. 01730 893344 sales@winetours.co.uk www.winetours.co.uk Atol 2543/aito

QUALITY ROSE WINE: 14 different wines. Devigne Wines: 01938 553478. www.devignewines.co.uk

EYE DINE

DUCK CONFIT & FOIE GRAS from S.W. France at everyday prices. Confit Direct, 01938 553478 www.confitdirect.co.uk

BILL O'HAGAN is current holder of Britain's 'Best Sausage Maker' award. That's why he called his website top-sausage.com - visit it.

EYE CONTACT

ASIAN INTRODUCTIONS Guaranteed. Suman Marriage Bureau – Established 1972. (ABIA). 0208 571 5145. www.suman-online.com

SPEED DATING – the new way to meet other professionals. 20+ three minute face-to face dates in 1 night Telephone 08702 430 935 www.speeddater.co.uk

REGULAR ADULT PARTIES daytime & evenings, luxury Central London locations, couples & singles welcome, call Gordon 07971 298111 limelight_club@lycos.com

THAI CONNECTION – Thailand's oldest agency. Over 650 marriages. Videos, brochure: 01582 481725.

ATTACHED? SEEKING ROMANCE? Call David at LOVINGLINKS 08456 440 919. Info line 0906 550 1361 (calls cost £1 a minute) – www.lovinglinks.co.uk. Discreet dating at the speed of email.

RUSSIAN LADIES, attractive and sincere, seek relationship/marriage. Meet many Russian ladies in Britain. Unlimited introductions. Excellent success rate. IFM 01708 478697 www.intromoscow.co.uk

DATING LINE 0906 752 6299* Live 1-2-1 Chat 0906 734 3206** Gay Chat 0906 952 6006* http://www.harmonypartners.co.uk PO Box 17 TN23 7YQ. Calls cost *75p/** £1/min from BT Landlines

MEET THAT someone special with Cloud Nine Connections. Free Membership. Tel: 01702 304 163. www.cloudnine-uk.co.uk

BEST SINGLES MAGAZINE in universe. Free details PTP(PE), P.O. Box 40, Minehead, TA24 5YS. Tel: 01643 709 509

SECRETARY, 29, 5' 3" with long blonde hair. Loves dressing up in stockings, short skirts and high heels. Call me and tell me your fantasies. 0909 972 7398 £1/min

GIFTS FOR THE REDHEAD in your life: www.redandproud.com – Tel: 01844 274635

PRIVATE EYE

BOOKS
Available direct from PRIVATE EYE

New publications:

The PRIVATE EYE Annual 2003

Mediaballs

St Albion Parish News Book 6: Vicar at War!

Order online at www.private-eye.co.uk Click on "books" Or simply call 0870 750 1713 (9.30am-5.30pm, Mon-Fri) From overseas: + 44 (0) 1795 414 870

LOOKING FOR A LIAISON? Blonde, 30 year old ex-model. Discretion assured, email stellascott1@yahoo.co.uk 07050 266 138

ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL, TALL, medium-build, mature real woman (family-free), seeking to meet dominant successful men in Central London who are 6 ft. or taller and good with their hands, for regular and prolonged ecstasies of various kinds. Interests: Art, Business, Science, Law, Philosophy, Literature, Sexology and living life to the full. 07814 536933 (No text or voicemail messages please.)

NOMOREFROGS.CO.UK – no more cards, no more turkey, no more shopping... no more relationship? Hop in!

ADDITIONS. 'Attached' discreet loving agency for married people. 020 8905 3304, 020 8958 9657

GOING SHOPPING?

then make sure you're dressed for the occasion

'No. I haven't got a fking loyalty card!'**

An ideal gift for anyone from 16 to 160

TOP QUALITY 100% COTTON. S/M/L/XL/XXL/XXXL.
£14.99 + £2.00 p&p each. ALLOW 21 DAYS FOR DELIVERY.
CHEQUES/P.O. PAYABLE TO **fatlooby**. P.O. Box 162.
ST LEONARDS ON SEA. EAST SUSSEX. TN38 0ZL
TEL 01424 443212 07990 594598 EMAIL: fatlooby@yahoo.co.uk

** T-shirts will return to original price of £18.00 + p&p on 1st January 2004 **

PRIVATE EYE

BACK ISSUES
Original copies available direct from PRIVATE EYE

A UNIQUE RECORD OF OUR TIMES: AN UNUSUAL BIRTHDAY PRESENT

Issues available from the 1960s to the present day from as little as £5 for an original magazine (inc p&p)

Availability and orders online
at www.private-eye.co.uk
Click on "back issues"
Or simply call 0870 750 1713
(9.30am-5.30pm, Mon-Fri)
From overseas:
+ 44 (0) 1795 414 870

DIRTY GIRL WANTED, 25/45, for occasional scrubbing sessions in London. Email applytoscrub@yahoo.co.uk

AMAZINGLY SEXY BLONDE, slim, female, 56, offers fun and friendship to warm-hearted, genuine, generous male, London. Box number 77192

GOOD LOOKING, INTELLIGENT, upmarket group of couples would like to hear from similar, and discerning ladies to join us for occasional erotic and fun evenings done in style. Hants/London. Reply Box 77238 or email nedwob@bigfoot.com

GENTLEMEN. OVER 50? Feel 10 years younger? Great news! You are in great demand by our very attractive ladies – please call 0870 242 4212. www.attractivepartners.co.uk

LIVE 121. Intimate conversations! Let's be WICKED now! 0906 507 0797. Calls cost £1.50/min. PO Box 121 TW8 OEW

LIVE 121. Let's be WICKED now! 0906 507 0780 Calls cost £1.50/min PO Box 121 TW8 OEW

CHAT ROOM: 25p/min 100+girls online 24hrs. RLF, im72hr 09062 765264

MEET ORIENTAL LADIES in Britain for love, romance, etc. Tel: 0161 9983 669 / 0788 163 0007 – e-mail tararainbow@yahoo.co.uk

EYE TECH

DOMAIN NAMES from £5.00 p.a. + VAT. Great, friendly service. www.discountdomainsuk.com

EYE LOVE

CHEEKY YOUNG BUCK wants to fetch slippers for older stag. monkeyhas fun@hotmail.com

POLITICAL CORRECTION? Masterful, handsome M/44, seeking erotically yielding adventuress. 0771 318 7024

CHAIN-SMOKING BLONDE wants humour back in her life, would like to meet established, intelligent, witty, non smoker in his 50s. Photo please. London area Reply Box 77091

SLIM, AFFECTIONATE, SENSUAL MALE, 38, loves all the good things about London life, seeks adventurous, optimistic, slim female to share London, weekends away and possibly more. Vaughan365@fsmail.net

SINGLE, PROFESSIONAL GENTLEMAN, 35, seeks attractive, intelligent girl, 20-38 to accompany him to a music festival in Austria with love and marriage a long-term aim. Reply Box 77281

VIKING, 35, south-based, seeks conquest. Reply Box 77305

LITERATE, FIT, ARTY PROFESSIONAL male, 40, WLTM slim, curvy female, 25-35ish. Ldn/Mids/Nth. Email cah0831@yahoo.co.uk

SLIM, AFFLUENT, Warwickshire based, tall, early 50s guy separated, in to tennis, skiing, cooking and dancing. Would like to meet lady, late 30s early 40s for long-term relationship; she must be slim and sun loving. Reply Box 77401

a cartoon is not just for christmas...

hundreds of original published cartoons by britain's top cartoonists all available to buy.

for themed cartoons search the subject index

medicine

the cartoon gallery can now be found exclusively at www.cartoongallery.co.uk

...but they do make a unique christmas gift

viewing appointments can be made at
gosh! 39 great russell street, london wc1b 3ph
tel: 020 7636 1011 fax: 020 7436 5053
email: cartoongallery@easynet.co.uk

Want to be part of the official opposition?

Call us to get the story on 020 8640 3696

Journalism Training Centre

info@jtctraining.com www.jtctraining.com

PRIVATE EYE

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

£2.50 PER WORD VAT inclusive £25.00 minimum charge Colour £12.00 Box Number £12.00

Fax: 020 7379 7118 Email: private-eye@mcmslondon.co.uk

or call John Eaton on 020 7240 9129

PRIVATE EYE McMillan-Scott, 10 Savoy Street, London WC2E 7HR

Name .....

Address .....

Telephone number .....

Post your advert with credit card details, cheque or postal order.

Card number ..... Valid from date .....

Expiry date ..... Issue number (Switch) .....

Box number required ☐

Continue on separate sheet if necessary

SPEAK ANOTHER LANGUAGE? SPEAK IT BETTER.

•FRENCH •SPANISH •Italian •GERMAN

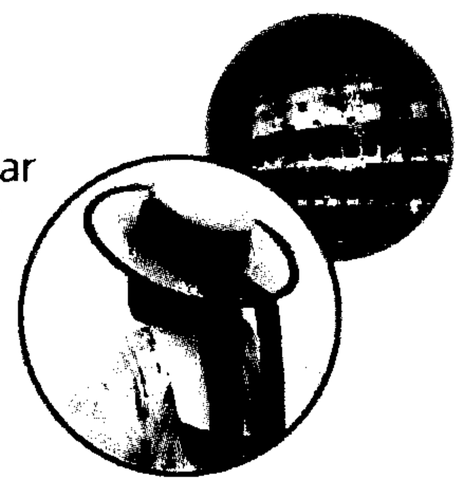
Audiomagazines for intermediate-to-advanced language learners

Now you can continue your language study month in and month out with *Champs-Elysées*, *Schau ins Land*, *Acquerello italiano*, and *Puerta del Sol*, internationally acclaimed audiomagazines unlike anything for language learners you've ever seen.

"...better than a language course." – About.com

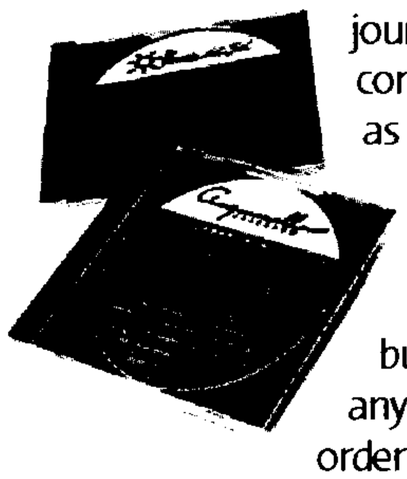
Authentic Radio-Style programmes

Each monthly (Spanish & Italian appear every 2 months) audiomagazine, hosted by popular native broadcasters, consists of an hour long radio-style programme on audiocassette or CD. An accompanying 60-70 page magazine contains a full printed transcript, a glossary averaging 600 words & expressions translated into English, plus scores of background notes on people, places, events, and grammatical issues.



On-going Language Learning in an Entertaining Cultural Context

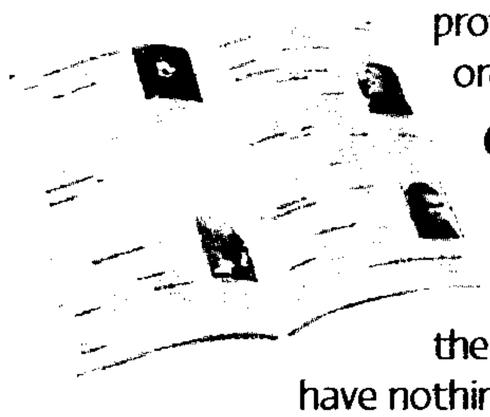
You'll hear original authentic interviews with politicians, writers, artists, sportsmen, journalists, celebrities, and segments covering current events and issues, and insights into contemporary culture and beloved traditions. By giving you an opportunity to hear the language as it's really spoken, we help you expand your vocabulary and vastly improve your ability to understand the spoken language.

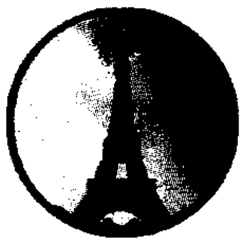


The Most Flexible Way to Perfect Your Language Skills

Because each audiomagazine is portable, it's easy to integrate language study into your busy life. Work on fluency while commuting, walking the dog, exercising, cooking dinner, anytime and anywhere you want! If you need or want to make faster progress you can order the optional study supplements which are work sheets containing innovative listening exercises and grammar drills, and are available for each issue with the answers included.

Over and over again we are told there is no better product for sophisticated language learners. Why not find out for yourself what thousands of business people, teachers, diplomats, and professionals across the world are raving about. Just fill in the order form below, ring us, or order online.





Order Risk Free! Subscribe today!

DOUBLE MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE: Take 6 weeks to try your first edition. If it doesn't totally reenergize your language study, let us know and we will completely refund your money — you can even keep your first issue — so no returns hassle. Secondly, if ever in the future you decide it's not for you, we'll send you a refund for any issues not mailed. You have nothing to lose.

Champs-Elysees, Spike Island, 133 Cumberland Road, Bristol BS1 6UG

Champs-Elysées AUDIOMAGAZINES

YES, Please rush me my first audiomagazine!

Champs-Elysées (French)	☐ 5 monthly editions on tape, £59	☐ On CD, £69	☐ Supplement, add £15
	☐ 11 monthly editions on tape, £109	☐ On CD, £129	☐ Supplement, add £33
Schau ins Land (German)	☐ 5 monthly editions on tape, £59	☐ On CD, £69	☐ Supplement, add £15
	☐ 11 monthly editions on tape, £109	☐ On CD, £129	☐ Supplement, add £33
Acquerello italiano (Italian)	☐ 6 bi-monthly editions on tape, £69	☐ On CD, £81	☐ Supplement, add £18
Puerta del Sol (Spanish)	☐ 6 bi-monthly editions on tape, £69	☐ On CD, £81	☐ Supplement, add £18

(All prices include P&P within the UK and overseas)

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms _____

Address _____

_____

☐ **Cheque enclosed** (payable to Champs-Elysées Ltd.)

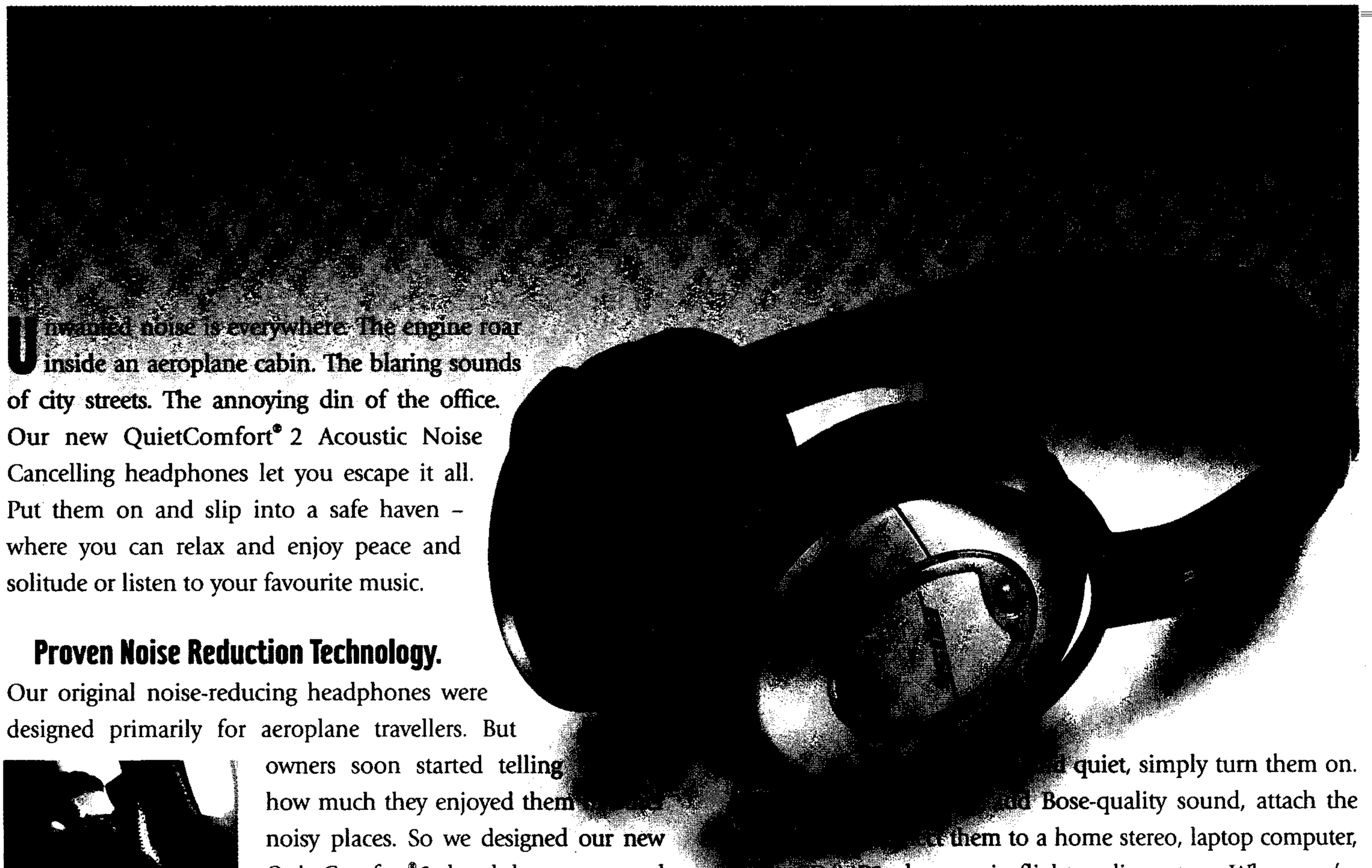
Debit my VISA/Mastercard/American Express/Eurocard/Switch/Diners

Card No. _____ **Expiry Date.** ___ / ___ **Issue** _____ (Switch)

Credit card orders may be faxed on 0117 929 2426 Outside the UK call (44) 117 929 2320

POST TO: CHAMPS-ELYSEES, DEPT. PE2612, FREEPOST LON 295, BRISTOL, BS1 6FA

www.champs.co.uk 0800 833 257



Unwanted noise is everywhere. The engine roar inside an aeroplane cabin. The blaring sounds of city streets. The annoying din of the office. Our new QuietComfort® 2 Acoustic Noise Cancelling headphones let you escape it all. Put them on and slip into a safe haven – where you can relax and enjoy peace and solitude or listen to your favourite music.

Proven Noise Reduction Technology.

Our original noise-reducing headphones were designed primarily for aeroplane travellers. But owners soon started telling us how much they enjoyed them in noisy places. So we designed our new QuietComfort® 2 headphones around the same US patented technology to electronically identify and dramatically reduce noise, while faithfully preserving the film, movie dialogue or silence you want. The *Philadelphia Daily News* says that "Even in the noisiest environment, wearing these phones creates a calming, quiet zone for easy listening or just snoozing."

Our Best Sound Ever.

New QuietComfort® 2 headphones deliver the best audio performance we have ever developed for headphones. Highs are impressively crisp and clean. Lows are deep and enveloping. Vocals are reproduced with lifelike authenticity. When audio critic Wayne Thompson heard our new QuietComfort® 2 headphones, he reported, "Bose engineers have made major improvements." Whether you are looking for noise reduction or high-performance headphones for music, we think you'll agree – QuietComfort® 2 headphones simply make your music sound better.

Enhanced Comfort And Portability.

Respected columnist Rich Warren says "The QuietComfort® 2 lives up to its name, enveloping you in blissful sound in the utmost comfort. It's easy to forget they're on your head." To enjoy peace quiet, simply turn them on. Bose-quality sound, attach the them to a home stereo, laptop computer, portable CD/MP3 player or in-flight audio system. When you're done, our new fold-flat design allows you to quickly tuck your headphones away in a bag or briefcase, so you can take them almost anywhere.

Experience Them For Yourself.

We don't expect you to take our word for how dramatically our new headphones reduce noise, how clean and full they sound or how comfortably they fit. So we invite you to try them for 30 days, satisfaction guaranteed. If you can live without them, return them for a full refund. It's that simple. Be sure to ask about our **10-month payment plan** with no interest charges from Bose.* QuietComfort® 2 headphones – the new standard from Bose, one of the most respected names in sound.

ORDER BY 30 DEC. 2003 TO RECEIVE FREE DELIVERY.

CALL 08000 85 85 72

Quoting Reference 3715

For information on all our products: **www.bose.co.uk/3715**

(Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Day Tel _____ Evening Tel _____

Return coupon to: Bose Ltd., Freepost EX 151, Exeter, EX1 1ZY. No stamp necessary. 3715

If you do not wish to receive mailings from carefully selected companies, please advise us.

BOSE®
Better sound through research

*Instalment payment plan available on credit/debit cards only and subject to status. Your credit/debit card will be charged each month, with 0% finance charge from Bose. In the event of a late payment, credit/debit card company interest charges may apply. Instalment payment plan and free delivery offers not to be combined with any other offer or applied to previous purchases. Free P&P applies to UK deliveries only. Price and payment plan subject to change without notice. Delivery subject to product availability. ©2003 Bose Corporation. All rights reserved. Quotes reprinted with permission from: Jonathan Takiff, *Philadelphia Daily News*, 29/5/03; Rich Warren, *News-Gazette*, 19/5/03; Wayne Thompson, Portland *Oregonian*, 18/04/03.

9 770032 888105 52>